R. White sculp.
Johannes Scott
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PRACTICAL

DISCOURSES

Upon ſeveral

Subjects.

Vol. I.

By *JOHN SCOTT* D. D. late Rector of St. *Giles*'s in the Fields.

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340–13

To the Honorable

WILLIAM MOUNTAGUE, *Esq*;

THE following Discourses do breath the Spirit of the Author, (who being dead yet speaketh.) For they Carry in them a very sensible Concern for the honor of God, and for that (in which that honor has chiefly displayed it self to us,) the good of Mankind. For it will be no hard Matter for a considering Reader to be Convinced, that Misery (whether here, or hereafter) is the fatal Consequence of wickedness; and that to make our selves happy we must make our

ſelves Good. And therefore it is hoped, that the ſeaſonable publication of them may by God's bleſſing, and by the ſweet and forcible inſinuations of that Candor, Zeal, and Reaſon, with which they are inculcated, at leaſt aſſiſt a vitious Age to Recollect it ſelf; and may ſo far do ſo, as to be a means to reclaim ſome of thoſe, who have blotted it with that Character. And this hope is ſo much the greater, becauſe, as we may rationally expect God's bleſſing upon our good Endeavors; ſo we may the more firmly do ſo, when ſuch our Endeavors are warm and hearty. The Good and Merciful God accompany the

deſign

deſign of the Author with his Grace; and extend that Grace to the utmoſt extent of the publication; and by making both effectual turn our hopes into propheſie.

Sir, *The Relations of the deceaſed Author having obſerved your great reſpect and kindneſs to him, and your diligent attendance upon his Miniſtry, hope the Dedication of theſe excellent Reliques of his will be acceptable to you, as they are like to be of ſingular uſe, profit and advantage to all pious and good Chriſtians.*

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1 TIMOTHY IV. 6.

Bodily exerciſe profiteth little; but godlineſs is profitable unto all things, having promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

THE great Deſign of *Chriſtianity* being to promote our *future Happineſs*, and qualify us for it; Things are more or leſs valuable in its eſteem, as they more or leſs conduce to this *great* and *excellent* End. And hence the Apoſtle tells us, that of all the Virtues Chriſtianity obliges us to, *Charity is the greateſt*, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 13. that is, a ſincere Love of *God*, and an univerſal good Will to *Men*; and the greateſt it is upon this account, becauſe of all Virtues it is moſt *congenial* to the *Heavenly* State, that being a State of *endleſs* Love and *pure* Friendſhip; and all other Virtues are valued more or leſs proportionably, as they partake of this Virtue of *Charity*. To give *Worth* to our *Faith*, it is neceſſary it ſhould *work by Love*, Galat. v. 6. To make our *Knowledge* acceptable, it is neceſſary it ſhould run into *Love*, 1 Cor. viii. 2, 3. yea without *Charity* the Gift of *Miracles*, *Almſ-*

giving, and *Martyrdom* it ſelf are Things of *no value* in the accounts of *Chriſtianity*, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 1, 2, 3. Nay ſo much is this great Virtue deſigned by the Chriſtian Religion, that the Apoſtle tells us that the *end of the Commandment is Charity*, 1 Tim. i. 5. that is, all the *Duties* which the Commandment enjoyns are deſigned only as *Means* to advance and perfect our Love to *God* and *Men*: And all *Means*, you know, are more or leſs excellent proportionably, as they conduce to the *Ends* they are deſigned for. Wherefore ſince our *future Happineſs* is the ultimate *End* of Chriſtianity, and univerſal *Love* our moſt neceſſary *Qualification* for it, it neceſſarily follows that the *Goodneſs* of all Religious *Means* conſiſts in their Aptitude to *abſtract* and *purify* our Affections; to *exalt* and *ſublimate* our Love, and to *propagate* in us that godlike and heavenly Temper, which is ſo neceſſary to *qualify* us for the Enjoyment of God and Heaven. But alas! how ordinary is it for Men to miſtake their *Means* for their *Ends*, and to value themſelves upon doing thoſe Things, which if they be not directed to a farther *End*, are altogether inſignificant; accounting thoſe Things to be *abſolutely* good, which are but *relatively* ſo, and which, unleſs they conduce to that which is good, are perfectly *indifferent*.

ferent. Of which we have too many ſad Inſtances among our ſelves; for how many are there, who though they have *nothing* elſe to prize themſelves for, but only of their keeping of *Faſts* and looking *ſourly* on a Sunday, their hearing ſo many *Sermons*, and numbering ſo many *Prayers*; are yet bloated with as *high Conceits* of their own Sanctity and Godlineſs, as if they had commenced *Saints*, and were arrived to the higheſt degrees of *Perfection*: And tho *Pride* and *Malice*, *Covetouſneſs* and *Ambition*, are the only *Graces* they are eminent in, yet ſhall you ſee theſe empty wretched Things pearched upon the Pinacle of *Self-Conceit*, and from thence looking down upon poor *moral* Mortals as if they were Things of an *inferior Species*, not worthy to be reckoned in the ſame *Claſs* of Beings with themſelves. Such flaunting Hypocrites, it ſeems, there have always been, and in theſe later Times it is foretold they ſhould abound; for ſo the Apoſtle tells us 1 *Tim.* iv. 1. that *the Spirit ſpeaketh expreſly*, that in the later Ages there ſhould ariſe a ſort of People who *departing from the Faith, ſhould give heed to ſeducing ſpirits and doctrines of devils*; who ſhould *forbid marriage*, and *command Abſtinence from Meats*, verſ. 3. that is, as I ſuppoſe, ſhould place all their Religion in *outward* and *bodily* Severities,

which at beſt are only *Means* and *Inſtruments* of Religion; and that in theſe they ſhould pride themſelves, as if they were the only *Saints* of the Age: whereas, in truth, they would prove the rankeſt *Hypocrites* that ever appeared in a religious Vizard. And of theſe he exhorts *Timothy* carefully to *forewarn* his Flock, and for his own part to *reject* their profane and ridiculous Fables; and rather to exerciſe himſelf in true *ſubſtantial* Godlineſs, than in ſuch *outward bodily* Rigors and Severities; for which he ſubjoyns this general Reaſon, *for bodily exerciſe profiteth little*, that is, *mere outward* bodily Exerciſe in Religion abſtracted from *inward* Piety and Godlineſs, is of very little avail in a Religious Account: For the bodily Exerciſe here ſpoken of, it ſeems, was ſuch as had ſome *little* Profit attending it, and conſequently was ſuch as had ſome *general* Tendency to Good, and was improveable to *ſome* advantage, had it been *wiſely* managed and directed. For πρὸς ὀλίγον, here tranſlated *little*, is not ſo to be underſtood, as if it ſignified *nothing*; becauſe it is here oppoſed to ſomething that is greater, *viz.* to πρὸς πάντα: *Bodily Exerciſe profiteth little, but Godlineſs is profitable for all things*; and therefore this bodily Exerciſe muſt profit *ſomething*, though leſs than *Godlineſs*, which is profitable for *all* things:

things: As when *Plato* ſays Σωκράτες ἐπ' ὀλίγον φρονήσεως, ἀληθείας δὲ πολύ, *Socrates* muſt be a little attended, but *Truth* a great deal more. And if it be ſuch an Exerciſe as doth profit a *little*, then it muſt be ſuch as is *Religious*, and is of ſome *ſmall* account in Religion. In the Proſecution of this Subject therefore I ſhall do theſe two things:

I. Shew you what this *outward* or *bodily* Exerciſe in Religion is.

II. In what Caſes it is that it *profits* little.

I. Wherein doth this *bodily* Exerciſe conſiſt? I anſwer, it conſiſts in theſe ſix things:

1. In an outward viſible *Profeſſion* of Religion.

2. In bodily *Severities* upon Religious Accounts.

3. In bodily *Paſſions* in Religion.

4. In bodily *Worſhip*.

5. In bodily *Fluency* and *Volubility* in Religious Exerciſes.

6. In a mere outward *Form* or *Round* of Religious Duties.

1. It conſiſts in an outward viſible *Profeſſion* of Religion. That we ſhould make a viſible *Profeſſion* of the true Religion, when it is ſufficiently propoſed to us, is an unqueſtionable *Duty*, and that for this

Reaſon; becauſe not to *profeſs viſibly* what we believe to be the true Religion, is an open *diſowning* of God, who is the immediate Object of all true Religion. For he that *believes* that this is the Will of God, and yet is either *aſhamed* or *afraid* openly to *avow* and *acknowledge* it, declares that he is either aſhamed of God, or that he fears *Man* more than *God*; both which are highly impious. Beſides, by our *viſible* owning of Religion, we propoſe it to *others*, who by our Example may be perſwaded to embrace it as well as we; and it is our Duty not only to *entertain* the true Religion our *ſelves*, but ſo far as in us lies, to *propagate* it to *others*; that ſo diffuſing our *Light* round about us, others may be *directed* to Heaven by it as well as our ſelves. This therefore is of *ſome* Account with God, that we *viſibly* profeſs the true Religion; but if this be *all* we do, it will profit us but very little. For if we do not own Religion in our *Actions*, while we profeſs it in our *Words*, we contradict our ſelves; our *Practice* gives the Lye to our *Creed*, and our wicked *Lives* baffle our holy *Profeſſion:* for while a Man acts *contrary* to the Rules of his Religion, he doth as effectually *diſown* it, as if he ſhould openly *renounce* his Baptiſm, and make a publick *Recantation* of Chriſtianity. For as our *Profeſſion* of Religion

gion is performed by a *viſible* ſignification of our Belief of it, and as this may be ſignified by our *Actions* as well as our *Words*; ſo in effect we do *renounce* Religion when we give any *viſible* ſignification that we do *not* believe it; and this we do as well when we *act* like Infidels, as when by *Words* we declare our Infidelity. For by our *Deeds* we may ſignify our Minds as well as by our *Words*, and he that *acts* as if he did not believe, doth give a more *convincing* Argument of his Infidelity, than all his *Words* or *Profeſſions* can be of the contrary; becauſe it is rationally ſuppoſable that a Man will rather *pretend* to believe what he doth not, than that he will *act* contrary to his own Belief and Judgment; it being a greater degree of *Violence* to our ſelves to *act* contrary to what we do believe, than to *pretend* to believe what we do not. So that it is not all our *Talk* and *verbal* owning of Religion that will ſerve the end of a *viſible* Profeſſion, which is, ſo to own God as to induce *others* to own him as well as our *ſelves*; becauſe he that denies God in his *Actions* will never be able to induce others to believe that he doth *ſincerely* own him in his *Words* and *Profeſſions*. Wherefore unleſs we will *live up* to the Rules of our Religion, we were as good not to make any *viſible* Profeſſion of it; for our *Profeſſion* will ſerve

no good Ends of Religion; it may indeed *diſgrace* it in the Opinion of thoſe who meaſure its Goodneſs by the *Lives* of its Votaries; for either they will think that our Religion *teaches* us to live as we do, and that will make them *abhor* it; or elſe they will imagine that notwithſtanding our Profeſſion we do *not believe* it, and that will make them *ſuſpect* it to be a Cheat and Impoſture. So that for any *Good* Chriſtianity is like to reap from *wicked Chriſtians* profeſſing it, it were highly deſirable that they would *renounce* their Baptiſm, and openly *declare* themſelves Atheiſts or Infidels; becauſe by their *Actions* they blaſpheme the Religion they profeſs, and by *aſſuming* to themſelves the holy Name of Chriſtians they do but more openly *profane* it.

2. Another ſort of *bodily* Exerciſe that is of *ſome*, though but *little* Account in Religion; is our voluntary undergoing of bodily *Rigours* or *Severities* upon the ſcore of Religion. There is doubtleſs a very *wiſe* uſe to be made of *bodily* Severities in Religion, provided they be but uſed with that *Prudence* and *Caution* as they ought to be; for they are excellent Remedies againſt many of our inordinate fleſhly *Inclinations*, to tame our extravagant *Appetites*, and to render them more tractable to the Commands of *Reaſon* and *Religion*: beſides, that in the general

general they are of ſingular Uſe to wean our Souls from the Pleaſures of the *Body*, which do often *corrupt* the palate of the *Mind*, and render it *incapable* of reliſhing *divine* Enjoyments. For if we *indulge* to our Appetites all thoſe *lawful* Pleaſures which they crave, our Souls will be apt to contract *too great* a Familiarity with the *Fleſh*, and to be ſo taken up with the Delights and Satisfactions of it, as to neglect thoſe *diviner* Pleaſures for which they were created, and which are more *natural* and *congenial* to them; and conſidering that in our *future* State we muſt live without theſe *Bodies*, and take leave of all the Pleaſures of them, it is very requiſite that we ſhould now before-hand *wean* and *abſtract* our ſelves from the Enjoyments of *corporeal* Senſe, that ſo when we come to *part* with them we may know how to be *happy* without them, and be fit to live the Lives of *naked* Spirits. And therefore we find that there has ſcarce been *any* Religion whatſoever pretending to qualify Men for *another* Life, but hath impoſed *Faſting* and *Abſtinence*, and other bodily *Severities*, as proper Means to *luſtrate* and *purify* the Mind, and to *prepare* it for immediate Converſes with God and ſeparated Spirits; but then the Conſequence was, that the over-ſtrict *Impoſition* of theſe *Inſtrumentals* of Religion occaſioned a world

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of *Superſtition*; for being ſo ſtrictly impoſed, they obtained ſo far in the Opinion of the World, as to be reckoned among the *Eſſentials* of Religion, and counted abſolutely good, and in their own *Nature* pleaſing and grateful unto God; which poſſibly by degrees introduced thoſe φείσια μυσήρια, horrid and bloody Myſteries into the *Heathen Religion.* For Mankind being once poſſeſſed with ſuch an Opinion of God, as to think he was pleaſed and delighted to ſee his poor Creatures *afflict* and puniſh themſelves; it was eaſie from thence to infer that he would be much more pleaſed to ſee them *butcher* themſelves, and ſprinkle his Altars with their own *Blood.* And as this *over-weening* Opinion did probably introduce *humane Sacrifices* into the *Heathen* Religion; ſo it is certain that it hath introduced ſundry falſe Doctrines into the *Romiſh*; as particularly, that *Faſting*, and *Whipping* our ſelves, and going on *Pilgrimages*, are *meritorious* Things; that by them we *expiate* our Sins, and make *Satisfaction* to the Juſtice of God: as if the Guilt that binds us over to *eternal* Perdition were to be expiated by a ſound *Whipping*, or a *ſhort Pilgrimage* were a proportionable Commutation for the *eternal Penance* of Hell Fire. But theſe are the vain Imaginations of *Men*, who would faign impoſe Laws upon *God*,

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and preſcribe to him the *Meaſures* of Puniſhment; who would *do* as wickedly as they pleaſe, and *ſuffer* what they pleaſe for ſo doing. But let us not deceive our ſelves, if *we* will chooſe to *ſin*, it is reaſonable that that *God* whom we offend by our Sin ſhould chooſe and appoint our *Puniſhment*. It is by no means fit that *Criminals* ſhould be their own *Judges*; for if they were, they would have very little Reaſon to be afraid of ſinning; becauſe they would be obliged to *ſuffer* no more for it than what they *pleaſed* themſelves: but the Right of *puniſhing* is in the *offended* Party; and therefore if we will offend God by violating his Laws, we have no right to *chooſe* our own *Penance*, but muſt, whether we will or no, ſubmit to what *He* thinks fit to inflict upon us; and what that is he hath told us before-hand, even *everlaſting* Expulſion from his Preſence into the Society and Portion of Devils, and damned Spirits. So that for us to expect to attone and ſatisfy God by little *voluntary* Penances of our own, is juſt as unreaſonable as if a Murderer ſhould cut off his little Finger, and thereupon expect to be excuſed from the Penalty of the Law.

And as theſe *bodily* Severities are no *Expiations* of our Sins, ſo neither are they in their own Nature *pleaſing* and *grateful* unto God: for he is a *good* God, and an univerſal

ſal *Lover* of all his Creation; and conſequently can be no farther *pleaſed* with the Sufferings and Afflictions of any of his Creatures, than as they are *neceſſary* either to do *them* good, or to make them exemplary to *others*, or to vindicate the *Honour* of his own violated Laws; neither of which Ends are ſerved by *voluntary* Penances and Severities as ſuch, if they be not ſubordinated to the Ends of *Virtue* and *Religion*. For what can *Faſting* ſignify, if it be not deſigned to famiſh our *Luſts*? Can our hungry Bowels be a *delightful* Spectacle to that God who feeds the young Ravens, and takes ſo much care to provide for all his Creation? What Virtue is there in the Chaſtning of our *Bodies*, if it be not intended to humble and mortify our *Souls*? Do we think that that God, who is ſo zealous of our *Welfare*, can be recreated with our *Miſeries*, or take pleaſure in our *tragical* Looks, and *bloody* Shoulders? 'Tis true, ſo far as theſe things are *Inſtruments* of Good to us, they are pleaſing unto God, even as all other *Inſtruments* of Religion; but it is not the ſuffering of our *Bodies* he is pleaſed with, but the good which it doth our *Souls*: but if they do our *Souls* no good, if they do not purify our *Affections*, and wean us from fleſhly *Deſires*, and make us more fit for the heavenly State, they are as inſignificant

ſignificant in the Account of God, as the paring of our Nails, or the clipping of our Hair.

3. Another ſort of theſe *bodily* Exerciſes that are of *ſome*, though but *little* account in Religion, is bodily *Paſſions* in Religion. There is, I confeſs, an excellent Uſe to be made of our bodily *Paſſions* in the Exerciſe of our Religion, provided we do not place our Religion in them; for if we do, they will betray us into the groſſeſt *Cheats* and *Impoſtures*. For in the general we find, that our *Paſſions* do wing our *intellectual* Faculties, and render them more *intenſe* and *expedite* in their Operations. For whilſt the *Soul* and *Body* are united to one another, there is a *mutual* Reflowing and Communication of *Paſſions* between them, inſomuch that whenſoever the *Soul* is any ways affected with any Object, there immediately follows a ſuitable Perturbation or Paſſion in the *Body*; and then this Paſſion of the *Body*, as it is grateful or ingrateful to it, doth more vigorouſly affect the *Soul* with Love or Averſation; and then the *Soul* being thus reaffected and incited by the *bodily Paſſion*, will more vehemently *purſue* or *ſhun* the Object which cauſed its *firſt Motion* or *Affection*. When therefore our Souls and Bodies do thus *ſympathize* with each other in the Exerciſes of Religion, we muſt neceſſarily

ceſſarily perform them with *greater Vigour* and *Intenſion.*

But to make this more plain to you, I will briefly inſtance in thoſe four great Paſſions of Religion, viz. *Love*, and *Hatred*, and *Sorrow*, and *Joy*. As for that of *Love*; when the Soul is affected with *God*, or *Virtue*, or any other *amiable* Objects of Religion; immediately there follows a *ſweet* and *grateful* Paſſion in the Body. For the *Heart* being dilated towards the beloved Object, puts the *Blood* and *Spirits* into a free and placid Motion, which diffuſes a certain *agreeable Heat* into the *Breaſt*, and invigorates the *Brain* with a flood of *active* Spirits; and then the *Soul* being ſenſible of this grateful Emotion in the *Body*, is thereby more vigorouſly *incited* to purſue thoſe *amiable* Objects wherewith ſhe was firſt affected. And ſo for *Hatred*; when the *Soul* is practically convinced by the Arguments of Religion of the *Odiouſneſs* of any Evil it forbids, the *Enmity* and *Hatred* ſhe hath towards it cauſes an anxious Contraction of the *Heart*, and Compreſſion of the *Animal Spirits*, which produces a *Chilneſs* in the *Breaſt*, a retarding of the *Blood*, and an unequal motion of the *Pulſe*; and then the *Soul* ſympathizing with the *Body*, cannot but be ſenſible of this ungrateful Paſſion it is put into, which muſt needs add to her *Hatred* of thoſe *odi-*

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ous Objects which were the Cauſe of it, and cauſe her more *vehemently* to ſhun and avoid them. So again when the *Soul* is moved to *Sorrow* and *Repentance* for any paſt Sins and Miſcarriages, the ſad Regrets ſhe ſuffers within her ſelf produce a very doleful Paſſion in the *Body*; ſuch as pinches the *Heart*, congeals the *Blood*, and cauſes an ungrateful Languor of the *Spirits*; and then by compaſſionating her grieved *Conſort*, ſhe is thereby excited to a higher degree of *Diſpleaſure* againſt thoſe Sins that cauſed its Grief and Diſturbance. Laſtly, when the *Soul* is *joyed* and *delighted* with any religious Object, or Exerciſe; by that ſweet *Complacency* ſhe enjoys within her ſelf, there is produced a moſt *pleaſant* Emotion in the *Body*, the Animal Spirits flowing to the Heart in an *equal* and *placid* Stream; where being arrived through its dilated Orifices, they ſooth and tickle it into a moſt *ſenſible* Pleaſure; and then the *Soul* being affected with the *Body*'s Pleaſure, doth from thence derive an *additional* Joy, which doth more vigorouſly encourage her to *purſue* thoſe Objects, and *continue* thoſe Exerciſes from whence her *Original* Joy proceeded.

So that, you ſee, that by reaſon of that *perpetual* Intercourſe there is between our *Souls* and our *Bodies*, there is an excellent Uſe even of our *ſenſitive* Paſſions in Religion.

on. And it cannot be denied but that a *gentle* Temper of *Body*, whoſe *Paſſions* are ſoft, and eaſie, and ductile, and apt to be commoved with the *Soul*, may be of great *advantage* in our Religious Exerciſes; becauſe whenſoever it is *religiouſly* affected, its Paſſions will be apt to *intend* and *quicken* the Affections of the *Soul*, and to render them more *vigorous* and *active*; but farther than *this*, they are of no account at all in Religion. For as there are many Men who are *ſincerely good*, that yet cannot raiſe their *ſenſitive* Paſſions in their *religious* Exerciſes; that are heartily *ſorry* for their Sins, and yet cannot *weep* for them; that do entirely *love* God and *delight* in his Service, and yet cannot put their Blood and Spirits into the *enraviſhing* Emotions of *ſenſitive* Love and Joy: ſo on the other hand, there are many groſs *Hypocrites* that have not one dram of *true* Piety in them, who yet in their Religious Exerciſes can put themſelves into wondrous *Tranſports* of *bodily* Paſſion; that can *pour* out their Confeſſions in Floods of *Tears*, and cauſe their Hearts to dilate into *Raptures* of *ſenſitive* Love, and their Spirits to tickle them into *Ecſtaſies* of Joy; which is purely to be reſolved into the *different Tempers* of Mens Bodies, ſome Tempers being naturally ſo *calm* and *ſedate*, as that they are ſcarce capable of being diſturbed into a Paſſion;

ſion; others again ſo *ſoft* and *tender* and *impreſſible*, that the moſt frivolous Fancy is able to raiſe a Commotion in them. And hence we ſee that ſome People can *weep* moſt heartily at the Misfortunes of Lovers in Plays and Romances, and as much *rejoyce* at their good Succeſſes, though they know that both are *Fictions* and mere Idea's of *Fancy*; whereas others can ſcarce ſhed a *Tear* or raiſe a *ſenſitive* Joy at the *real* Calamities or Proſperities of a *Friend*; whom yet they love a great deal more than theſe Men can poſſibly do their *feigned* and *Romantick Heroes*. And yet alas how very often do Men place the *whole* of their Religion in theſe *mechanical* Motions of their *Blood* and *Spirits*; that think they are exceeding *good*, if they can but chafe themſelves into a devout *Paſſion*; and that it is an infallible Sign of *Godlineſs* that their Blood and Spirits are eaſily *moved* by religious Idea's, and apt to be *elevated* or *dejected* according as ſad or joyous Arguments are *pathetically* repreſented to their *Fancies*: and though they do not underſtand the *Argument*, or which is all one to them, though that which is delivered for Argument is mere *Gibberiſh*, and inſignificant *Canting*, that hath nothing of *Argument* or *Reality* in it, only ſome *empty Fiction* is conveyed to their Fancies by a muſical Voice in *fanciful*

Expreſſions; yet becauſe they are affected by it, and it raiſes a *ſenſible* Perturbation in their *Blood* and *Spirits*, they preſently conclude it to be an *Income* of God, and an infallible Token of his *ſpecial Love* and *Favour* to them; as if it were a Sign of *Godlineſs*, and a Mark of *God's Favourites* to be affected with *Nonſenſe*, feathered with ſoft and delicate Phraſes, and pointed with pathetick Accents.

Thus there are ſome Men who believe themſelves to be *converted*, meerly becauſe they have run through all the Stages of *Paſſion*, in that new Road of *Artificial Converſion* which ſome modern Authors have found out; for according as the *Work* of *Converſion* hath been deſcribed by ſome modern Authors, it is wholly placed in ſo many different Scenes of *Paſſion*. For firſt a Man muſt paſs under the Diſcipline of the *Law*, and the Spirit of *Bondage*; that is, he muſt be *frightned* into a Senſe of his loſt and undone Condition, and in this Senſe he muſt *grieve* bitterly for his Sins as the *Cauſes* of his Ruin and Perdition; and this is that which they call *Conviction* and *Compunction*. From hence he muſt proceed into the *Evangelical* State, and paſs into the Spirit of *Adoption*, the Entrance of which is *Contrition* or *Humiliation*; which conſiſts in an *ingenuous Sorrow* for Sin, proceeding from a *paſſionate*

paſſionate Senſe of God's *Love* and *Goodneſs*; and then having acted over all theſe mournful *Paſſions*, he embraces and lays hold upon *Chriſt*, which is the concluding Scene, and is altogether made up of *Joy* and *Exultation*, and ſo the *Work* of Converſion is *finiſh'd*. Now though I do not at all deny, but to the Converſion of an *habitual* Sinner it is indiſpenſably neceſſary that he ſhould be *convinc'd* of his Danger, and deeply *affected* with Sorrow and Remorſe for his Folly and Wickedneſs; (and therefore would not be ſo underſtood, as if I intended to *diſcountenance* theſe *holy* Paſſions, which are ſuch neceſſary *Introductions* to a ſincere Converſion:) yet neither do I doubt, but by the help of a *melancholy Fancy* attended with ſoft and eaſie Paſſions, a Man may perform all theſe *Parts* of Converſion, and yet be never the better for it; for many times theſe *Paſſions* are only the neceſſary effects of a *diſeaſed Fancy*, and are altogether as *mechanical* as the beating of our *Pulſe*, or the Circulation of our *Blood*. And hence we ſee that this kind of *Converſion*, which wholly conſiſts of *bodily Paſſions*, doth commonly both begin and end with ſome languiſhing Diſtemper of the *Body*, in which the *Fancy* is over-clouded, and the Motion of the *Blood* and *Spirits* retarded by the Prevalence of *black* and *melancholy* Humours;

which being once evacuated, the Man's Body returns again to its *former* Temper, and upon this he becomes the *ſame* Man again that he was before his *pretended Converſion.* And accordingly it is obſerved by thoſe very Perſons who place the whole Work of Converſion in theſe *Mechanical* Paſſions, that generally after the *Pangs* of Regeneration are over, their Converts grow *cold*, and *careleſs*, and *remiſs* in Religion; and ſo like to what they were in the State of *Nature*, that you would hardly believe they had ever been *converted*; which is a plain Evidence that this ſort of *Converſion* doth not reach the *Soul*, that it doth not alter our *practical* Judgment of things, nor rationally determine our Wills to *new Choices* and *Reſolutions*; and conſequently that it is nothing but a mere Train of *ſenſitive* Paſſions *mechanically* excited by the *Fancy*. And hence you may obſerve in the Modern Stories of our *Religious Melancholians*, that they commonly paſs out of one *Paſſion* into another without any manner of *Reaſoning* and *Diſcourſe*; now they are in the Depths of *Grief* and *Deſpair*, by and by upon the Pinacle of *Joy* and *Aſſurance*; and yet they are the *ſame Men*, neither *better* nor *worſe*, when they do *deſpair*, as when they are *aſſured*; and conſequently have no more Reaſon to be *aſſured* now, than they had when they

they were encompaſſed with all the Horrors of *Deſperation.* For the only Reaſon any Man hath to be *aſſured* of God's Love, is his *Likeneſs* and *Conformity* to Him; which is that alone that *endears* us unto God, and entitles us to the Promiſe of his *Favour.* And yet though theſe Men do not pretend to be *better,* or more *Godlike* now they are *aſſured,* than they were when they *deſpaired*; yet their Hearts are overwhelmed with Floods of *ſenſitive* Joy, and they are ſtrangely comforted they know not *how* nor *wherefore:* And though while they were in *Deſpair,* they thought of thoſe Promiſes and Motives of *Comfort* that now *raviſh* and *tranſport* them, and had every whit as much *Reaſon* to lay claim to them too; yet then they lay like Cakes of Ice at their Hearts without affording them the leaſt Gleam of Warmth and Comfort; which is a plain evidence that both their *Joys* and *Sorrows* are the products of *bodily Temper,* and not of *Reaſon* and *Judgment*; becauſe they paſs out of one into the other without any intervenient *Diſcourſe,* and are agitated into contrary *Paſſions* whilſt they are under the ſame *Rational* Motives; are dejected this moment, and comforted the next, which argues, that their *Reaſon* hath no hand in their *Paſſions*; for if it had, they could never be ſo contrarily affected. Nor can it be ſuppoſed,

that ſuch *irrational* Paſſions are raiſed in them by the *Divine* Spirit; becauſe He *ordinarily* works upon Men in an *humane* and *rational* way, beginning with their *Underſtandings*, and ſo perſwading their *Wills*, and exciting their *Paſſions* by *rational* Motives and Arguments: Thoſe Paſſions therefore that are not *ſo* excited can be reſolved into no other Principle but that of *bodily* Temper. And accordingly you may obſerve, that all this Train of *Paſſions*, wherein too many Men do place the *whole* of their *Converſion*, are neceſſarily connected and chained to one another; ſo that if you move but the firſt Link, all the reſt will naturally follow; which is a plain Argument that they may be excited not only in a *free* and *rational*, but alſo in a *neceſſary*, or *mechanical* way. As for inſtance, Suppoſe theſe Men before their *pretended Converſion* to have a good Doſe of *Melancholy* in their Tempers, this will naturally diſpoſe them to *terrible* and *mournful* Conceits; and being thus diſpoſed, their tender *Fancies* are eaſily impreſſed with *dreadful* Images of the Wrath of God, and their own undone Condition: And according as the *Temper* of their Bodies is more or leſs diſpoſed to *fear*, ſo this frightful Paſſion continues *longer* or *ſhorter* upon 'em; if it continues *longer*, it will by the *reiterated* Impreſſions of thoſe dreadful Objects

Objects that first raised it, by degrees be heightned into *Horror* and *Desperation*; and when it is so, then the Man is under *Conviction* of his undone Condition, and under the *Terrors* of the Law, and the Spirit of Bondage; which, according to the new Method, is always the *first* step to Conversion. And when the *first* Fury of *Despair* is over, it naturally issues into a *deep Melancholy*, and there spends it self in woful Regrets, and self-condemning Reflections; and this is that which they call *Attrition*, or *Compunction*, which is the next Step to be taken in this *methodical* way of *Conversion*. And hence many People do continue many Years together in this *languishing* state, in all which time they believe themselves to be under the Lash of the *Law*, and the Discipline of the *Spirit of Bondage*; when, God knows, many times there is nothing in it but a mere *melancholy* Humour tinctured and heightned with *dismal Notions* of Religion. But then when the Melancholy begins to *disperse*, and to make way for the Spirits to flow into the Brain in a more *brisk* and *active* Torrent, and so to *warm* and *refresh* the drooping Fancy; they will by degrees *scatter* those horrid Images and dismal Fancies of Religion that rid the Imagination, and raised those tragical Passions; and so the Man will gradually emerge out of the Spirit of *Bondage*

into a more *comfortable* and *Evangelical* Condition. For now his Fancy being ſomething more *lightſome*, but ſtill retaining ſome *Reliques* of its former Darkneſs, will be diſpoſed for *grateful* as well as *diſmal* Phantaſms, and to be impreſſed by *lovely* and *joyous*, as well as *terrible* and *mournful* Objects. So that if now *God* or *Chriſt*, or any other Object of *Religion*, be but repreſented to the Man in ſuch a *Dreſs* of Metaphors and gliſtering Alluſions, as is apt to affect his *carnalized* Fancy, he will preſently form ſuch *charming* Conceits and *pleaſant* Imaginations of them, as will neceſſarily put his Blood and Spirits into a moſt *amorous* Emotion towards them; ſo that now he ſhall ſeem *inflamed* with the Love of Chriſt, and fancy him *twined* in his Arms and Embraces: whereas in *Reality* the Thing he is ſo infinitely fond of, is nothing but an *Idol* of his own Fancy, a mere *Baby-Chriſt*, dreſt up by his own *Imagination* in all the Charms of *ſenſual* Beauty, and furniſhed with Smiles, and Kiſſes, and Careſſes, and all the pretty Indearments of a doating Lover. And now the Man's Fancy being thus partly hung with fine Pictures of Chriſt, thoſe Reliques of *Melancholy* Vapours that are yet remaining in it, will very much diſpoſe it to *ſad* and *mournful* Conceits; eſpecially when this *Idol* of Chriſt, which he ſo much doats upon,

on, ſhall be repreſented as *weeping* over his Sins, and *grieved* at the Unkindneſſes he ſhews him. And now his Fancy being thus furniſhed with ſuch a Mixture of *amorous* and *mournful* Imaginations, muſt neceſſarily beget in him a Mixture of *Love* and *Grief* and cauſe him to *mourn* for his Sins; becauſe they make his Saviour *grieve* whom he ſeems to *love* ſo dearly: And this is *Humiliation*, which is the *third* Stage in this *imaginary* Road of Converſion. And now the Man having ſet up ſo *gay* an Image of Chriſt in his Fancy, and felt within himſelf ſuch *ſenſible* Pangs of *Love* towards him, and *Grief* for the Affronts and Unkindneſſes he hath offered him, his *amorous* Imagination will preſently ſuggeſt to him, that doubtleſs ſo *ſweet* a Saviour cannot but be conquered with all theſe *paſſionate* Indearments, and ſmitten with a *reciprocal* Love upon ſo many *feeling* Expreſſions of his Kindneſs towards him; and being poſſeſt with this Imagination, he will preſently fancy his *dear Image* of Chriſt into all the Poſtures of a tranſported *Lover*; ſmiling upon him, weeping over him, and ſpreading out his Arms to embrace him; upon which there will follow ſuch a ſweet Effuſion of his Spirits towards his enamoured Saviour, that he will fanſy himſelf to be leaping into his Arms, and *rolling* in his Boſom, and *reſting*, and

lean-

leaning, and *relying* upon him. And now his Fancy having carried him to his *Journey*'s *End*, and lodged him in the Embraces of his Saviour, O the Joy and Raviſhment! he feels his Heart pant through *Exceſs* of Delight, and is ready to break with its own *Raptures*. And thus you ſee how this whole Method of *Converſion* may be eaſily tranſacted by an *active* and *melancholy* Fancy.

And as it *may* be, ſo I doubt not but many times it *is*; for how many Men are there who ſtrongly *imagine* themſelves to have been *converted*, that yet are never the *better* for it, being ſtill as averſe unto *God* and *true* Goodneſs as ever they were before; nay and many times are ſo far from being *better'd* by their Converſion, that they are a great deal the *worſe* for it; for inſtead of *forſaking* all Sin, which is that wherein *true* Converſion doth conſiſt, they only *ſhift* their Vices, and many times in laying *one* Devil, they conjure up *ſeven* worſe in the room of it. Perhaps before they fanſied themſelves to have been *converted*, they were *openly* lewd and profane; they would ſwear and be drunk, and wallow in *Senſuality* and *Voluptuouſneſs*; but notwithſtanding theſe *beaſtly* and *damnable* Crimes, they had ſome very *amiable* Qualities in them; they were *courteous* and *affable*, and *kind* and *obliging*; *faithful* in their Profeſſions, and *juſt* and *honeſt*

honeſt in their Dealings; but now alas! by paſſing through theſe diſmal Stages of *pretended* Converſion, they have contracted ſuch a maſs of *melancholy Humours* as hath quite *ſoured* their ſweet and lovely Tempers into *Pride* and *Envy*, *Peeviſhneſs* and *Faction*, *Inſolence* and *Cenſoriouſneſs*, and all the other Ingredients of a *ſullen* and *unſociable* Nature. So that though now indeed they will not be *openly* lewd and profane, as they were before, yet, which is a great deal worſe, they will be *falſe* and *ill-natur'd*, and *griping* and *ungovernable*; and, which is worſt of all, they will be all this while under the Diſguiſe of *Religion*, and the Patronage of a deceived *Conſcience*: ſo that whereas their former Vices had only the Poſſeſſion of their *Wills*, but not of their *Conſciences*, theſe are ſeized of *both*, which renders their Condition the more dangerous. For heretofore *Virtue* and *Religion* had a ſtrong Party *within* them, there being a Law in their *Minds* that warred againſt the Law in their *Members*; but now all is *ſubdued* to the Dominion of their Sins, and their *Wills* and *Conſciences*, like *Simeon* and *Levi*, become *Brethren in Iniquity*. Whilſt therefore Men place their Religion in ſuch *artificial* Trains of *Paſſion*, they will be liable to all manner of *Cheats* and *Impoſtures*. For the Generality of Men being ignorant of the Power of *Melancholy*,

lancholy, and of the Frame and Structure of their own *Bodies*; if their *Fancies* are but tinctured with Religion, they will be apt to attribute every extraordinary Emotion they feel to the immediate Influence of the *Spirit* of God, and to account that to be *Grace* and *Inſpiration* which is a mere neceſſary Effect of *Matter* and *Motion*; and being once poſſeſſed with this Conceit, they lye open to all the Follies of *Enthuſiaſm*; for now nothing will ſatisfy them but *Heats* of Fancy, and *Tranſports* of Paſſion; and whilſt they ſhould be attending to the *ſober* Dictates of *Scripture* and right *Reaſon*, they will be looking for *Incomes*, and *Impulſes*, and *ſecret Manifeſtations*; and conſequently, will be apt to interpret every odd *Whimſey* for an inward Whiſper from *Heaven*, and every brisk *Emotion* of their Spirits for an immediate Smile of *God's Countenance*; than which, I dare boldly ſay, there is nothing more *miſchievous* to Religion, or *contrary* to the Life and Power of it. For *Religion* is a *wiſe*, a *ſtill*, and *ſilent* thing, that conſiſts not in Friſks of *Fancy*, and *Whirlwinds* of *Paſſion*; but in a *divine* Temper of Mind, and an univerſal *Reſignation* of our Wills to God; and this not only in intermittent *Fits* of Paſſion, but in the midſt of *cool* Thoughts and *calm* Deliberations. For *true* Religion is a State of a *fixt* and *conſtant* Nature, that doth

doth not *come* and *go*, like the Colours of a bluſhing Face, but is the *natural* and *true* Complexion of the Soul. How religious ſoever therefore we may be in our paſſionate *Heats* and *Tranſports*, it it altogether inſignificant, unleſs the *ſtanding Temper* of our Minds be *good*, and our Religion be ſettled in our *Natures*. For though it cannot be denied but theſe our *bodily* Paſſions do profit *ſomething*, as they are uſeful *Inſtruments* of Religion; yet I think it is very apparent from what hath been ſaid, that he who places his *Religion* in them doth but *deceive* his own Soul.

4. Another ſort of *bodily* Exerciſe that is of *ſome*, though but *little* Account in Religion, is *Fluency* and *Volubility* in Religious Exerciſes, or a Readineſs of *wording* our Thoughts in *proper* and *affecting* Expreſſions; either in *Prayer* to God, or in *ſpeaking* of God and Things divine: the proper Uſe of which is this, that in Prayer it is apt to *excite* and *kindle* our devout and religious Affections. For beſides that *Scantineſs* of Words in Prayer doth *divert* the Mind by putting it to the Trouble of inventing *new Expreſſions* to clothe its Thoughts and Deſires, which becauſe of its Inability to attend many things at once, muſt needs *interrupt* its Zeal and Intention, and ſo make *Breaks* and *Chaſms* in its Devotions; whereas when a Man

Man expreſſes himſelf *eaſily* and *fluently*, ſo that his Words keep pace with his *Deſires* and *Affections*, he will be able to keep his Thoughts more *intent*, and to *fix* himſelf upon God with all the *united Vigour* of his Mind, which not being diſturbed with the *Difficulty* of expreſſing its Deſires, will be the more at leiſure to *intend* them, that ſo its Devotions may flow *ſecundo flumine*, in a more eaſie and undiſturbed Current: beſides which, I ſay, we all find by Experience, that *proper* and *fluent* Expreſſions are in their own Nature apt to *warm* and *heighten* our Affections, which nothing hath a greater Influence in than the Charms of *pathetical Oratory*. To be able therefore to word our Prayers in *proper* and *ready* Expreſſions, is of conſiderable *Advantage* to our Devotions; our *Words* being ſo apt to affect our *Minds*, and our *Paſſions* to keep time with the Muſick of our own *Language:* and whilſt we wear theſe *Bodies* about us, and our *Souls* are ſo clogged and depreſſed with *fleſhly* Deſires, we have need enough to uſe all Arts and Advantages of *ſpiriting* and *enlivening* our Devotions. But yet I confeſs, of all theſe *bodily* Exerciſes, this is the *leaſt conſiderable* in Religion; becauſe we may eaſily ſupply the Defect of *natural* Fluency by excellent *Forms* of Prayer, the Uſe of which is doubtleſs far more *expedient* than the beſt

of

of our *extempore* Effuſions. For he that uſes a *Form*, hath nothing elſe to do in Prayer but only to *recollect* his own Thoughts, and fix them upon God; and to keep his *Mind* affected with a *due Senſe* of the Divine Majeſty, and his own *Need* of and *Dependance* upon him: whereas he that prays *extempore*, beſides all this, is concerned to *invent* proper and apt *Expreſſions*, leſt he ſhould be *impertinent* or *indecent* in his Addreſſes unto God; unleſs he expects that the *Spirit* ſhould *immediately* dictate to him the Words of his Prayer, which is to ſuppoſe himſelf a Perſon immediately *inſpired*, and his Prayer of *Divine* Revelation; and conſequently, of equal Authority with the *Scriptures* themſelves. But the beſt *Religious* Uſe that can be made of *Fluency* and *Volubility* of Speech, is in *ſpeaking* to others of *God* and Things *Divine*; here it is uſeful indeed to make a Man an *Orator* for *Religion*, and to enable him to recommend it more *effectually* to others. Thus far therefore this ſort of *bodily* Exerciſe may be *profitable*, both as it may be made *inſtrumental* to raiſe our *own* Devotions, and to propagate true Piety unto *others*; but beyond *this*, I know no place at all that it hath in Religion: for there is no doubt but we may be very *good* Men *without* this Gift of *Fluency*, and very *bad* Men *with* it, there being no Neceſſity of Conſe-

Conſequence from an *honeſt* Heart to a *voluble* Tongue. And certainly that which proceeds from no *higher* Principle than meer *natural* Enthuſiaſm, and conſequently may be eaſily attained by Perſons groſly *hypocritical* and *debauched*, ought not to be looked upon as a Mark of *Godlineſs*. And yet alas! how many Men are there that place *all* their *Religion* in their *Tongues*, and eſteem it as a certain Sign of *Grace* that they are able to pray in *fluent* Expreſſions, and to talk of God in *rapturous* Flights of Fancy? For they being moſt commonly *ſtraitned* in their Religious Exerciſes, and not able to *vent* themſelves with any *Freedom* or *Readineſs*; when they fall into an extraordinary *Fit* of Fluency and Enlargement, of which they can give no natural Account, they preſently conclude it to be an *immediate* Gift of God's *Spirit*, and a ſpecial Token of his *peculiar* Favour to them. And accordingly, if you peruſe the late Hiſtories of the *ſpiritual Experiences* of our *modern* Converts, you will find that they contain little elſe but ſtrange Relations of their *rapturous* Diſcourſes, and *wondrous* Enlargements in *Prayer*; which becauſe they have ſomething *extraordinary* in them, are generally thought to be the immediate Effects of the *Divine* Spirit: whereas commonly they proceed meerly from the preſent *Temper* of the *Body*, and are as *mechanical* as any

any other Operations of *Nature*. For let a Man's Body be but put into a *fervent* Temper, his Spirits into *quick* but *manageable* Motions, this will naturally produce in him a more *fine* and *exquiſite* Power of Perception, by cauſing the Images of Things to come *faſter* into his Fancy, and to appear more *diſtinct* there; and then his Fancy being more *pregnant* with new Idea's and Images than it uſes to be, his Expreſſions muſt neceſſarily be more *fluent* and *eaſie*. But then if when this *natural Fervour* of his Temper be intended with Vapours of *heated Melancholy*, his Fancy be but often impreſſed and rubbed upon with the moſt vehement and moving Objects of Religion, ſuch as *God* and *Chriſt*, and *Heaven* and *Hell*; it muſt neceſſarily raiſe in him *great* and *vehement* Paſſions, and dictate to him *pathetick* and *rapturous* Expreſſions. And this hath been commonly experimented by the *Devoto*'s of all Religions; for even among the devouter *Turks* and *Heathens* we may find as notorious Inſtances of thoſe *Incomes* and *Enlargements*, as in any of our *modern* Hiſtories of Chriſtian Experiences. Thus the *Heathen* Poets, in all high Fluſhes of their Fancy, conceited themſelves *divinely* inſpired: *Eſt Deus in nobis, agitante caleſcimus illo.* And that great Orator *Ariſtides* poſitively affirms himſelf to be *inſpired* in his Orations; be-

cauſe ſometimes he felt in himſelf an *extraordinary* Vein of *Fluency*, which was only excited by a brisker Agitation of his Spirits. Wherefore it is not at all to be wondered at if, when Men are employed in Religious Exerciſes, the ſame *natural* Enthuſiaſm, eſpecially when it is exalted by *Religious* Melancholy, ſhould ſo wing and inſpire their Fancies. For there is no Man whatſoever, that is but *religiouſly* inclined, and of a *ſoft* and *impreſſive* Temper, but by *familiarizing* his Fancy to the great Objects of *Religion*, and ſetting them before his Mind in *diſtinct* and *affecting* Idea's, may eaſily chafe himſelf into ſuch a *Pathos* as to be able to talk to, or of, God and Religion, in *lofty* and *rapturous* Strains of Divine Rhetorick; nor is it any Argument of ſuch a Man's being *inſpired*, that his Diſcourſe doth ſo *move* and *affect* thoſe that hear him; becauſe all Language that is *ſoft*, *fluent*, and *pathetical*, is naturally apt to make deep *Impreſſions* on the Auditors. For even the *Grecian* Sophiſts, as *Plutarch* tells us, by their *ſinging Tones*, and *honied Words*, and *effeminate* Phraſes and Accents, did very often *tranſport* their Auditors into a kind of *Bacchical* Enthuſiaſm: And no doubt but the Hearers of whom he ſpeaks, who were wont to applaud their Orators at the End of their Declamations with a θείως, θεοφορήτως, δαιμονίως, ἀνθρωπίνως,

divinely,

divinely, heavenly, preciouſly, unimitably ſpoken, found themſelves as much *moved*, as many a Man doth at a Sermon; who yet thinks it is not the *Art* of the Preacher, but the *Spirit* of God ſpeaking *in* and *by* him that warms and excites them. Wherefore as we would not deceive and undo our own *Souls*, let us have a great care that we do not place our Religion in any ſuch *Enthuſiaſtick* Fervors of *Spirit*, and Overflowings of *Fancy*; for though this may be a *helpful* Inſtrument to us in our Religious Exerciſes, yet it is not by this that we are to eſtimate the *Goodneſs* of them, but by thoſe Laws and Circumſtances which do *moralize* humane Actions, and render them *reaſonable*, and *holy*, and *good*. For 'tis not in loud *Noiſes* or melting *Expreſſions* that the *divine* Spirit is diſcovered, but in a *divine Nature* and *God-like Diſpoſition*; and the Effects of true Religion are not to be look'd for in *Words* and *Talk*, but in *Life* and *Action*; and therefore St. *Paul* tells the *Corinthians*, ſome of whom, it ſeems, had too great an Opinion of his Way of Religious *Rhetorication*, that he would come among them and know, *not the ſpeech of them that were puffed up, but the power*; *for the Kingdom of God*, ſaith he, *conſiſteth not in word, but in power*, 1 Cor. iv. 19, 20.

Fifthly, Another ſort of *bodily* Exerciſe that is of *ſome*, though but *little*, Account in Religion, is *outward* and *bodily* Worſhip. There is no doubt but we ought, when we are worſhipping God, to ſignify the *profound* ſenſe that we have of his Majeſty and Greatneſs by *outward* Adorations and an *humble* and *lowly* Demeanour. For though we may ſignify to God the *Honour* and *Worſhip* that we owe him by the *internal* Acts of our *Mind*, by our *Love*, and *Fear*, and *Hope*, and *Admiration*, becauſe he ſees our *Hearts* and diſcerns the moſt *ſecret* Motions of our *Souls*; yet ſince to him we owe the Members of our *Bodies*, as well as the Faculties of our *Minds*, it is very reaſonable that we ſhould worſhip him with both, that both our *Bodies* and *Minds* ſhould offer the Tribute of Homage which they owe to the *Fountain* of their Beings; that ſo having *each* of them a ſhare in the Bounties of God, they may be *Co-partners* too in the Returns of *Gratitude* to him. And though the *internal* Acts of our *Minds* do ſufficiently ſignify unto God our *Eſteem* and *Veneration* of Him, yet it is highly reaſonable, eſpecially in our *publick* Addreſſes to him, that we ſhould ſignify it to *Men* alſo, that *they* may be excited by our *Example* to glorify God, and to acknowledge and adore the infinite Perfections of his Nature: and we have no other way

way to ſignify to *Men* our Veneration of God, but only by *corporeal* Actions, that is, by ſuch *Actions* or *Geſtures* of the Body as either by *Nature* or by *Cuſtom* are ſignificant of our *inward* Eſteem and Adoration of him. And this, without doubt, is a Part of *Natural Religion*; foraſmuch as there never was any People of *any Religion* whatſoever, but what have always expreſſed their Veneration of the *Divinities* whom they owned, by ſuch *external* Reverences as were cuſtomary amongſt them. And accordingly we are enjoined in Scripture to offer up unto God the Homage of our *Bodies* as well as of our Souls; *to worſhip, and bow down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker*, Pſal. xcv. 6. and *to glorifie him with our Souls and Bodies, which are his*, 1 Cor. vi. 20. And when the Devil ſolicited our Saviour with the Promiſe of all the Kingdoms of the World to bow down and worſhip him, that is, to render him *external* Homage and Reverence, our Saviour rejects the Motion with an *it is written, thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve*, Matth. iv. 10. which Words muſt be underſtood of *external* as well as *internal* Worſhip, otherwiſe his Anſwer is no wiſe *pertinent* to the Devil's Propoſals, which extended only to *external* Worſhip and Adoration.

And as *bodily* Worship is enjoined by express *Precept*, so it is warranted by the concurrent *Examples* of all holy Men; for in the *Old Testament* you have almost as many *Examples* of it, as there are Instances of *devout* and *religious* Persons: and so observant were the Jews of all *external Reverence* in their *Religious* Exercises, that *to fall down and kneel before the Lord our Maker* seems to have been *Proverbial* of their Prayers and Publick Worship. And lest any Man should imagine these *bodily* Reverences to have been Part of that *Ceremonial* Worship that was *abolish'd* by the Gospel, there are sufficient *Examples* of it recorded in the *New* Testament both to excite and warrant our *Imitation*. For even the blessed *Jesus* himself who thought it *no Robbery to be equal with God*, yet being in the *Form of a Servant*, he thought it no scorn to *kneel* and *prostrate* himself before him; for thus when he was in his last Agony, it is said, that *he fell on his face, and prayed*, Matth. xxxvi. 39. which in those Eastern Countries was a Signification of the *profoundest* Reverence: and afterwards when having awoke his Disciples, he returned to his Prayer again, St. *Luke* tells us that he *fell upon his knees and prayed*, Luke xxii. 41. Thus of St. *Stephen*, when he was breathing out his Soul in that hearty Prayer for his Enemies, it is said that *he kneeled down*,

down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this Sin to their Charge, Acts vii. 60. So alſo St. *Peter,* when he came to raiſe *Tabitha* from the dead, is ſaid to *kneel down and pray,* Acts ix. 40. And St. *Paul* acquainting the *Epheſians* how earneſtly he prayed for them, thus expreſſes himſelf; *for this Cauſe I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,* Epheſ. iii. 14. And when he was going to *Rome,* and had taken his laſt Farewel of the Brethren at *Miletum,* it is ſaid that *he kneeled down, and prayed with them,* Acts xx. 36. And how loudly ſoever ſome of our *new-faſhioned* Chriſtians may explode *external* Reverence under a Pretence of worſhipping God in a more *ſpiritual* Manner, it is certain that there never was any thing even *externally* more devout and ſolemn than the Religious Aſſemblies of the *Primitive* Chriſtians; for generally at the Reading of their *publick Liturgies,* the whole Congregation *kneeled* down upon the bare Floor with their *Heads* uncovered, their *Eyes* lift up to Heaven, and their *Hands* ſtretched forth in faſhion of a Croſs; and then the whole Congregation being compoſed into a deep Silence, the Miniſter began the publick Service in a moſt *ſerious* and *humble* manner, not throwing about his Prayers at random with a *clamorous, wild,* and *confuſed* Voice, but pronouncing them with a moſt decorous

Calmneſs and *Modeſty:* the People in the mean time demeaning themſelves ſo *ſolemnly* and *uniformly*, that you would have thought the whole Aſſembly to have been animated with *one Soul*, and that Soul to have been nothing elſe but a *vital Senſe* of the adorable Majeſty and ſupereminent Perfections of God. So heavenly wide was the *Primitive* Pattern from the Rudeneſs and Irreverence of our *modern* Devotions, that I doubt not ſhould thoſe bleſſed Martyrs and Confeſſors of our *holy Religion* ariſe from their Graves, and come into our *publick Aſſemblies*, they would ſuſpect that we met together rather to be *worſhipp'd* by God than to *worſhip* him; our uſual Poſtures being much fitter *for Judges* than for *Supplicants*, and ſuch as rather beſpeak us to be receiving Petitions *from* God, than offering up Prayers *to* him. For what *Sign* do we give that we come to worſhip the *great Majeſty* above, when we rudely ſquat upon our Seats with our Hats half on, as if we thought it too great a Condeſcenſion to *uncover* our Heads, and *kneel* before the *Lord our Maker*; and that we made not bold enough with him, unleſs we treated him as our *Fellow*, and it were a piece of holy Familiarity to be *ſaucy* in our Language, and *irreverent* in our Addreſſes to him?

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But by what hath been ſaid I think it is apparent, that *bodily* Worſhip is of ſo much *Account* and *Neceſſity* in Religion, that to neglect it is a Piece of great *Injuſtice* to God, and an high *Affront* to his Majeſty, whereunto we owe the *lowlieſt* Homage and Adoration. But after all it muſt be acknowledged, that unleſs our *bodily* Worſhip be attended with an *inward lively* Senſe of God, with great and worthy *Thoughts* of him and ſuitable *Affections* towards him, it is all but a perfect *Pageantry*; which, tho' it makes a goodly *Shew*, hath nothing of *Subſtance* or *Reality* in it: Nay if by thoſe *external* Reverences we render him, we do not expreſs the *inward* Veneration of our Souls; while we pretend to *worſhip* him, we *mock* him to his Face; and by offering him a *Shell* which hath no *Kernel* in it, we only ſeek to put a Trick upon him, to make him believe we *honour* and *adore* him, when in reality we do but more demurely *flout* him, and with our *Mock-Obeyſances* affront him with greater Ceremony: If therefore we do not bow our *Hearts* before him as well as our *Knees*, in our moſt ſolemn Addreſſes to him, we are but ſo many liveleſs *Images* of Prayer, that, like our Grandfathers Statues on their Tombs, have our Hands and Eyes lift up to Heaven, but no *Soul* to animate our Devotions. But God expects that thoſe that wor-

worſhip Him ſhould approach him with *pure* and *humble* Minds, with their Wills inſpired with *divine* Affections, and their Souls touched with an *over-awing* Senſe of his Majeſty; without which he accounts all our *bodily* Adorations to be nothing but *demure* Scorns, and *complemental* Mockeries; and therefore upon this very Account God denounced moſt fearful Judgments againſt *Iſrael*, becauſe *they drew near him with their mouths, and with their lips did honour him, when their hearts were removed far from him*, Iſa. xxix. 13.

Sixthly, and laſtly, Another ſort of *bodily* Exerciſe that is of *ſome*, tho' but *little* Account in Religion, is a mere outward *Form* or *Round* of Religious Duties, ſuch as *ſaying* of our Prayers, *hearing* the Word of God, and *receiving* of Sacraments, and the like; which are all of them expreſly enjoined by the Chriſtian Religion, as the *Means* by which we are to purge our Minds from all *Impurity* and *Wickedneſs*, and to acquire thoſe *divine Habits* of Piety and Vertue, which are neceſſary to qualify us for *eternal Life:* And without all doubt, ſuch *Means* they are as, if *rightly* uſed, will by the Bleſſing of God, and their own natural Efficacy, exceedingly *conduce* to thoſe great and worthy *Ends* for which they were ordained. For what *Means* can be more conducive to our Reformation

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and Amendment, than *conſtant* and *diligent* Prayer? for, beſides that hereby we *move* God to enable us to our Duty by his own *Grace* and *Aſſiſtance*; by theſe our ſolemn Addreſſes to him we take an effectual Courſe to *abſtract* our Minds from *carnal* and *ſenſitive* Things; to *excite* and *raiſe* our Affections towards God, and *inſpire* our Souls with an awful Senſe of his Majeſty; which are the moſt *rational* Antidotes we can take againſt the venomous Temptations of *Sin*. How neceſſary is it to make us throughly good, that we ſhould ſeriouſly and diligently attend upon the *Preaching* and *publick Miniſtries* of God's Word; the great *End* of which is to ſtate and deſcribe the *Bounds* of Chriſtian Duty, and to *explain* and *enforce* thoſe mighty Motives which Chriſtianity urges to oblige us to it? both which are indiſpenſably *neceſſary* to our Reformation; becauſe a Man cannot be *good*, unleſs he *knows* his Duty, and when he *knows* it, he will not be *good*, unleſs he be *perſwaded* to it. What can be more conducive to our *Growth* and *Progreſs* in all *Chriſtian* Grace and Virtue, than frequent *Receiving* of the Holy Sacrament? which, beſides as it is a Channel and Conveyance of the Divine Grace and Aſſiſtance to all *worthy* Communicants, doth *ſenſibly* repreſent to us one of the mightieſt Arguments to *Obedience* in all the Chriſtian Religion, *viz.* the *Death*

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and *Sacrifice* of our blessed Redeemer. For here we see his bloody Tragedy acted before our Eyes, the breaking of his *Body* and the pouring out of his *Blood* for us being *visibly* represented to us; which dismal Spectacle (if we have any Remains of Ingenuity in us) cannot but *affect* us both with Love to *Him* who suffered so deeply for us, and with Horror against our *Sins*, which brought those *Sufferings* upon Him: and being thus affected, how can we forbear vowing *Revenge* upon our *Sins*, and perpetual *Obedience* to our most loving *Redeemer*, which is one great End of this *sacred* Festival? So that these *outward* Duties are not only *necessary*, as they are *enjoined* by our Religion, but also as they are *effectual* Means and Instruments of that *internal* Piety and Virtue, which our Religion doth *principally* require and design: and therefore doubtless it cannot but be a great *Sin* for any Christian to live in the *ordinary Neglect* of these *instrumental* Duties, because in so doing he doth not only *affront* the Authority of that holy Religion to which he hath vowed *Submission* and *Obedience*, but also rejects the *Means* of his own *Recovery* and *Reformation*, and so doth openly declare himself a *reckless profligate* Creature, one that neither *is* good, nor ever *intends* to be so. But yet after all it must be acknowledged, that he that *only* prays,

prays, and hears, and receives Sacraments, and places *all* his Religion in a perpetual *Round* of theſe *outward* Performances, hath nothing of the *Life* and *Spirit* of true *Religion* in him: For, as I have already obſerved to you, theſe *Duties* are intended only for *Means* and *Inſtruments* of that *internal* Purity of Mind, and thoſe *Divine* and *Godlike* Diſpoſitions of Soul, wherein the *Life* and *Subſtance* of Religion doth conſiſt. Now you know it is not barely the uſing of *Means* that either *is* or *doth* Good, but the uſing them to ſome good *End* or *Purpoſe*: as for inſtance, *Books* are Means and Inſtruments of *Learning*; but it is not *barely* the uſing of Books, or turning over the Leaves of them, that will make Men *wiſe* or *learned*; but the uſing them ſo, as to *underſtand* the Contents of them, and acquaint our ſelves with the *Things* and *Notions* contained in them. Thus *Prayer*, and *Hearing* the Word of God, and *Receiving* of Sacraments, are doubtleſs excellent *Means* to make Men *good* and *virtuous*; but *barely* to uſe them, without any *farther* Intention, is to do a thing that ſignifies *nothing*, that neither is good in it *ſelf*, nor will do any good to *us*: If we would uſe them to any *Purpoſe*, we muſt uſe them to the *End* they are deſigned for, or elſe we had as good not uſe them at all. For we may as ſoon become good *Scholars* barely by turning

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over the *Leaves* of learned Books, as we ſhall good *Chriſtians* barely by *praying*, and *hearing*, and *receiving*. If we do not *pray* to the End we may be more *humble* and *heavenly-minded*; if we do not *hear*, and *receive* Sacraments to the End we may be more *juſt* and *charitable* and *meek* and *temperate*; we take a great deal of Pains to no purpoſe. For tho' a Hammer and a File are excellent Tools to make a Watch, or a Clock, or any ſuch curious Machin; yet doubtleſs you would account that Man extremely impertinent that ſhould reckon himſelf a skilful Mechanick meerly becauſe he knocks and files with them. And by the ſame Rule, tho' *Prayers* and *Sacraments* are excellent *Inſtruments* of Chriſtian *Piety* and *Virtue*, yet it is a ridiculous Vanity for a Man to eſteem himſelf a *good* Chriſtian, meerly becauſe he *prays* and *communicates*; becauſe as the Art of the Mechanick conſiſts not barely in uſing his Tools, but in uſing them ſo, as to perfect and accompliſh his Work with them; ſo the Virtue of a *Chriſtian* conſiſts not *barely* in Praying, Hearing, and Receiving, but in uſing theſe Duties with that Religious *Art* and *Skill*, as is neceſſary to render them *effectually* ſubſervient to the Ends of *Piety* and *Virtue*; and unleſs we uſe them to *theſe* Ends, we were as good not uſe them at all for any Benefit we are likely to reap from them.

them. For what doth it ſignify for a Man to *confeſs* his Sins to God, if he only go round in a Circle of *confeſſing* and *ſinning*, and *ſinning* and *confeſſing* again? Is it any Pleaſure to the Almighty, do we think, to hear us read over, with tragical Looks and woful Tones, the odious Catalogue of our uncancelled Guilts? is he ſo fond of the Affronts and Injuries we do him, as to take delight in hearing them recounted? No, doubtleſs, it is impoſſible. 'Tis true, he hath commanded us to *confeſs* our Sins to him; but why hath he done ſo? why, that our *Confeſſion* might be inſtrumental to our *Reformation*; that it might affect us with *Shame* and *Sorrow* for our Sins, and *Horror* and *Indignation* againſt them; and if this be not the *Effect* of it, we do but blazon our *Shame*, when we confeſs our *Sins*, and prefer a Bill of *Indictment* againſt our ſelves. To what purpoſe do we daily offer up our *Prayers* unto God, if we do not endeavour by our *Lives* to pleaſe him? Can we imagine him ſo eaſie a Soveraign as to be ſoothed and flattered with the humble *Petitions* and *Intreaties* of open and avowed *Rebels*? Certainly if we do, we are infinitely miſtaken: he bids us *pray* to him indeed, but why? why, that by our *conſtant* Addreſſes to him we might be always *affected* with ſo deep a Senſe of *his Soveraignty* over us and our *own Depen-*

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dance upon him, as might keep us continually in *Awe* of Him; and if this be not the *Effect* of our *Prayers*, we only talk to the Air, and ſpend our Breath to no purpoſe. To what End do we *praiſe* God, and make Rhetorical *Acknowledgments* of his *Glory* and *Goodneſs*, if we do not *imitate* him in thoſe *Perfections* for which we admire and laud him? Do we think ſo *wiſe*, ſo *great* a Being can ever be pleaſed and tickled to hear himſelf *extolled* and *commended* by a little of that fading Breath which *himſelf* gave being to? alas! no; he needs not our *poor Praiſes* to emblazon and magnify him, being *infinitely glorious* in his own Perfections, and a ſufficient Stage and Theatre to *Himſelf*. 'Tis true he bids us *praiſe* him, but why? why, that he might provoke us to *imitate* what we do *commend*, and to tranſcribe into our *own ſelves* thoſe adorable Perfections which we laud and admire in *Him*; and if this be not the *Effect* of our *praiſing* him, all the Good we ſay of him is nothing but *Flattery* and *Complement*. To what purpoſe do we come to Church to *hear* Sermons and pious Exhortations, if we do not *live* them too? Do we think to *pleaſe* God by meeting together to gratify our *Ears* or *Curioſity* with ſome new Notions, or quaint Piece of Oratory? If we do, we are much miſtaken. He hath *commanded* us indeed, diligently to attend the publick

publick *Preaching* and *Miniſters* of Religion; and why hath he done ſo, but only that we might *learn* his Will, and be *inſtructed* in the Motives to Obedience? And if this be not the *Effect* of our Hearing, we had as good ſpend our time in hearing the whiſtling of the Wind, or the roaring of the Sea. In a word, to what *End* do we receive the holy *Sacrament*, if we do not improve in *Virtue* by it? Do you think to pleaſe an *All-wiſe* God by eating a little *Bread*, and drinking a little *Wine*, in a devout and humble *Poſture*? Is it likely that ſo *wiſe* a Being ſhould be taken with ſuch an *inſignificant* Trifle? 'Tis true, He hath inſtituted this holy Solemnity for a *perpetual Memory* of our Saviour's Paſſion; but is this all do you think? Has he commanded us to meet, and eat and drink together, only to *remember* that a great while ago the bleſſed *Jeſus* was crucified at *Jeruſalem*? no, doubtleſs; that which he *ultimately* deſigned by this ſolemn Memorial was to inflame our *Love*, to confirm our *Faith*, and ſtrengthen our Reſolutions of *Obedience*; and if this be not the *Effect* of it, our receiving the *Sacrament* is of no more Account in *Religion*, than if we ſhould eat and drink only to ſatisfy our *Hunger* and *Thirſt*. This I have the longer inſiſted upon, becauſe it is ſo ordinary for Men to place *all* their Re-

ligion in these *instrumental Duties*, and to believe themselves highly in favour with God, *meerly* because they *pray* very often, and hear a great many *Sermons*, and are constant Communicants at the *Lord's Table*; when God knows all this is only the Religion of the *Means*, and is good only as it tends farther to produce in us a *divine Temper* of Mind, and to make us *sober*, and *righteous*, and *godly* in this present World; which if it doth not effect, it doth nothing at all, but is altogether *vain* and *insignificant*. Wherefore as you would not deceive and ruin your own Souls, beware of mistaking the *Means* of Godliness for *Godliness* it self, and of taking up your *Rest* there, where you should only *bait*, in order to a farther Progress; lest falling short of your *Duty*, you fall short of the *Reward* of it, and in the End receive your Portion with Hypocrites in the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone.

2. Having shewed what that *bodily* Exercise is which profits *something* in Religion, tho', compared with Godliness it self, but *very little*; I now proceed to the second thing proposed, which was to shew you in what Respects it is that this *bodily* Exercise doth profit but *little*. In general it profits but *little* in respect of those *great* and *noble* Ends

Ends which Religion doth moſt principally aim at: for there are four *great* Advantages which Religion doth principally deſign and intend us:

1. To *reconcile* us unto God;
2. To *perfect* our Natures;
3. To *intitle* us to Heaven;
4. To *qualify* us for Heaven;

And to each of theſe, theſe kinds of *bodily* Exerciſe are no farther *profitable* than as they conduce to a *holy Life* and *internal* Purity and Goodneſs; which is that alone by which theſe *great* Advantages are to be obtained: ſo that tho' they profit *ſomething*, yea very *much*, as they are *Means* of Godlineſs, yet compared with Godlineſs *it ſelf*, they profit but very *little*; becauſe theſe are only *inſtrumental* to make us godly, but it is *Godlineſs alone* that *reconciles* us unto God, and *perfects* our Natures, and *qualifies* us for Heaven. In theſe four Reſpects therefore theſe kinds of *bodily* Exerciſe do, in compariſon with *Godlineſs*, profit but very *little*.

1. As to the *reconciling* us to God. 'Tis true, this *bodily* Religion is *inſtrumental* to reconcile us unto God, ſo far as it tends to *purify* our Minds, and to *inſpire* us with a divine and God-like Nature; but farther than this, it hath no Influence at all upon it; for there is nothing can *reconcile* God to us, or us to God, but only a *mutual Likeneſs*

and *Agreement.* While we continue in our *Sins*, we cannot love God, *our* Nature being repugnant to *His*, who is infinitely *holy*, and *pure*, and *good*; nor can *He* love *us*, *His* Nature being repugnant to *ours*, which is *vile*, and *wicked*, and *unreaſonable*. And how can two Natures be *reconciled*, which have ſuch mutual *Antipathies* to each other? How can we *love* him whilſt we are ſo prevalently *averſe* to all that is *lovely* and *amiable* in Him, and ſo unreaſonably *fond* of every thing that He *hates* and *abhors*? Doubtleſs while there is ſuch a *Contrariety* between God and us, it is impoſſible we ſhould *love* him without *hating* our ſelves. Hence the Apoſtle tells us, that the *carnal Mind is not only an enemy, but that it is enmity it ſelf to God*, Rom. viii. 7. It is Spight and Rancor in the *Abſtract*, being as repugnant to His *pure* and *holy* Nature, as *Heaven* is to *Hell*, or *Light* to *Darkneſs*. And the ſame Apoſtle gives us an Account of this *Enmity*, and ſhews us from whence it doth ariſe, *Col.* i. 21. *And you that were ſometime alienated and enemies in your minds by wicked works:* Theſe are the Make-baits that infuſe into our Souls a ſecret Enmity to God, by inſpiring them with *ſuch Diſpoſitions* as are altog-ther repugnant to the *Purity* and *Holineſs* of his Nature; and there is nothing will *extinguiſh* theſe wicked *Diſpoſitions*, from

from whence our *Enmity* to God doth ariſe, but only the *contrary* Habits of *Virtue* and true *Goodneſs*. So that all our *bodily* Exerciſes in Religion do no otherwiſe tend to *reconcile* our Minds to God, than as they are *inſtrumental* to deſtroy the Body of *Sin* in us, and to beget in us a *Divine* and *God-like* Nature; which if they do not effect, they will *leave* us at as great a diſtance from God as ever they *found* us; and after all our *Profeſſions*, and *bodily* Severities, our *rapturous* Paſſions in Religion, and *fluent* Strains of Devotion; after our *Hearing*, and *Praying*, and *Receiving* of Sacraments, we ſhall be found as utter *Enemies* to God as ever we were before: For there is nothing can *reconcile* the Mind of a Man to God, but only a *thorough Conformity* and *Agreement* in Nature with him. And as we cannot be *reconciled* to God without being *godly*, ſo neither can God be *reconciled* to us. 'Tis true he bears a hearty *Good-will* to all his Creation, and earneſtly *deſires* the Welfare of every Being that he hath made capable of any degree of *Happineſs*; and there is no Man whatſoever excluded from this his *univerſal Benevolence*, which with outſtretched Arms embraces the *whole* Creation: But it is impoſſible he ſhould *love* any, ſo as to be *pleaſed* with or *delighted* in them, but only thoſe that are *good*; for tho' his

Love be terminated upon *infinite* Objects, yet it is founded upon one *unchangeable* Reaſon, and that is *true Goodneſs*, which is the *only* Motive of *wiſe* and *reaſonable* Love. Thus he loves Himſelf, not purely becauſe he is Himſelf; for that would be rather an *Inſtinct*, than a *reaſonable* Love; but becauſe he is *good:* and he loves Himſelf above all other Things, not out of a blind *unreaſonable* Fondneſs to himſelf, but becauſe he knows Himſelf to be the *higheſt* and *moſt perfect* Good. And if upon an impoſſible *Suppoſition*, he were *leſs good* than he is, he would doubtleſs *love* himſelf *leſs* than he doth; but becauſe his *own Eſſence* is the *faireſt* Copy, and *moſt perfect* Idea of Goodneſs; therefore if he love *reaſonably*, he muſt love Himſelf moſt; and conſequently love all other things *proportionably* as they *approach* and *reſemble* Himſelf in *Goodneſs*, and *Purity*, and *Holineſs*. For if he love himſelf *beſt*, becauſe he is *moſt good*, he muſt neceſſarily love all other things *proportionably* as they are *more* or *leſs* good; and indeed he could not love Himſelf *infinitely*, ſhould he love *us* for any *other* Reaſon, but that for which he loves *Himſelf:* For he can love Himſelf no farther than he hath Reaſon for it; and therefore if he had *other* Reaſons to love *us*, beyond what he hath to love *Himſelf*, he would not love Himſelf

ſelf *infinitely*; becauſe he would not have *infinite Reaſon* for it. So that it is plain, God loves *Himſelf* and *us* for the *ſame* general Reaſon. And as he doth not love *Himſelf*, but becauſe he is *good*; ſo he doth not love *us*, meerly becauſe we are ſuch and ſuch Men, out of a peculiar *Fondneſs* to our individual Perſons; but becauſe we *reſemble* Him in that *Goodneſs* and *Purity* for which he loves *Himſelf*. For one of theſe three things we muſt ſay, That either God loves us for *no Reaſon* at all, which would be a degrading of his moſt *wiſe* Love into a *fooliſh* Fondneſs; or elſe that he loves us for our *Sins*, which would be to make Him love *different* Objects, *Himſelf* and *us*, upon *contrary* Reaſons; or that he loves us for our *Goodneſs*, and *Conformity* to his own moſt *pure* and *perfect* Nature. This therefore is that *alone*, that will *reconcile* God to us, and without this all our *bodily* Religion is *inſignificant*. Tho' we ſhould profeſs Religion with the *Conſtancy* of *Martyrs*, and our whole Lives were a continued *Rapture* of Religious *Paſſions*; tho' we ſhould *faſt* our ſelves into Skeletons, and *pray* till our Knees clave to the ground; tho' we ſhould live upon *Sacraments*, and hear as many *Sermons* as there are hours in the Day; yet if upon *all this* we do not grow more *charitable* and *benevolent*, more *honeſt* and *temperate*,

perate, more *humble* and *heavenly minded*, it will be all to *no purpoſe*; for when all is done, there is nothing but *true Goodneſs* can indear us to the *good God*. So that it is apparent, that notwithſtanding all our *bodily* Exerciſes, ſo long as we continue in our *Sins*, there is ſo vaſt a *Gulf* between God and us, that neither we can go to *Him*, nor he come to *us*; and, unleſs God alters *his Nature* by becoming *impure* as *we* are impure, or we alter *ours* by becoming *pure* as *He* is pure, ſo *immenſe* is the Diſtance between him and us, that it is impoſſible we ſhould ever *meet* and *agree*. What the Prophet therefore ſays of Sacrifice, may be ſaid of all *bodily* Religion, *Will the Lord be pleaſed with thouſands of Rams or ten thouſand rivers of Oil?* Will he be reconciled with zealous Profeſſions, fluent Prayers, or melting Paſſions? no, no; *He hath ſhewed thee, O man, what is good. And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do Juſtice, to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God*, Micah vi. 7, 8.

2. *Bodily* Exerciſe profits but little in compariſon with *Godlineſs*, as to the *perfecting* of our Natures. 'Tis true, this *bodily* Exerciſe is *inſtrumental* of our *Perfection*, ſo far as it promotes in us the Virtues of *Godlineſs* and *Religion*; if it makes us *meek* and *humble*, and *juſt*, and *charitable*, and *temperate*; if

if it inſpires us with a *ſincere* Love to God, and a *dutiful* Awe and Dread of his Majeſty; if it produces in us a hearty *Submiſſion* to his Will, and a conſtant Dependence upon his Truth and Goodneſs; then indeed it doth *effectually* conduce to the *Perfection* and *Accompliſhment* of our Natures, it being productive of that wherein the *Perfection* of our Natures doth conſiſt: But if *theſe* are not the Effects of it, we are never the better for it, and after all our *Hearing*, and *Praying*, and *Profeſſing*, our Nature will be ſtill as *maim'd* and *imperfect* as ever it was before. For the *Perfection* of a Rational Nature conſiſts not in *Forms* and *Outſides*, and ſuch and ſuch *bodily* Motions and *mechanical* Exerciſes of our Senſe and Paſſion, but in being *wiſe* and *good*; in having our *Underſtandings* informed with the Principles of right Reaſon, and our *Wills* and *Affections* regulated by them. For to be a *perfect* Man, is to live up to the *higheſt* Principle of Humane Nature, and that is *Reaſon*; which is the proper Character of our Beings that *diſtinguiſhes* us from all *ſublunary* Natures, and ſets us in a *Form* of Being above them. When therefore we are releaſed from the Slaveries of *Senſe* and *Paſſion*, and all our Powers are perfectly ſubdued to this *ſuperior* Principle, as to do every thing that it *commands*, and nothing that it *forbids*,

and

and we chooſe and refuſe, and love and hate, and hope, and fear, and deſire, and delight, according as *right Reaſon* directs and dictates to us; then, and not till then, we are come to the full *Stature* of *perfect* Men in *Chriſt Jeſus*. Now what elſe is *Godlineſs*, but only an *Habit* of living according to the Laws of *Reaſon*, or an accuſtoming our ſelves in all our Circumſtances, to do thoſe Things that are moſt *fit* and *reaſonable*; to demean our ſelves towards *God*, our *Selves*, and all the *World*, with that Devotion, Sobriety, and Juſtice, as becomes *Rational* Beings placed in our Condition and Circumſtances? This is *Godlineſs*; and till we are in ſome meaſure arrived to *this*, our Faculties are wholly out of Joint, notwithſtanding all our *bodily* Religion. For ſo long as we live in a ſtate of *Sin*, we live in *Rebellion* to our own Reaſon, and the Natural Polity of our *Souls* is diſſolved into a wild confuſed *Anarchy*. Our *Reaſon*, that was made to govern us, is inſlaved by its own Vaſſals, and forced to truckle to our *Paſſions* and *Appetites*. The Law in our *Members* controuls the Law in our *Minds*, and countermands the Dictates of our *pureſt Reaſon*; and ſo our Nature is turned upſide-down, and the Cardinal Points of our Motion changed into quite contrary Poſitions. And ſo far is our Nature from being

perfected

perfected without *Godlineſs*, that it is the moſt wretched *confuſed* thing in the whole World; a mere undiſtinguiſhed *Chaos*, where *frigida cum calidis*, Senſe and Reaſon, Brute and Man, are ſhuffled together in a heap of rude and undigeſted Ruins: and being in this *ſick diſorderly* Condition, what can recover us but only inuring and accuſtoming our ſelves to live *godlily*; or, which is all one, according to the Preſcripts of *right Reaſon*? This, by degrees, will *re-advance* our *Reaſon* to its native Throne, and *reduce* our rebellious *Paſſions* and *Appetites* to a *pure* and *ſpiritual* Mind: This will ſet our diſjointed *Faculties* in order, and reſtore our decayed *Nature* to its *primitive* Health and Vigour. For by inuring our ſelves to a Life of *Reaſon*, our Paſſions and Appetites will by degrees be *tamed* and *civiliz'd*, ſo that at length it will be *natural* and *eaſie* to us; and then we ſhall chearfully go on from one degree of Virtue to another, till all the *Unevenneſſes* of our Natures are *filed* off, and our Souls are *poliſhed* into living Images of the *moſt perfect* God; till we come to that *heavenly* permanent ſtate of ever *knowing* and *doing* that which is *beſt* and *moſt reaſonable*: and this is the utmoſt Pitch of *Perfection* that any reaſonable Nature can aſpire to. So that it is *Godlineſs* alone that doth *perfect* our Natures, and reſtore us to the

pure

pure ſtate of *reaſonable* Beings. For to be *perfectly godly* is to be *perfectly conformable* to the eternal Laws of *Reaſon*; and he that is ſo, is advanced to the utmoſt Pitch of *Perfection* that his reaſonable Nature is capable of.

3. *Bodily* Exerciſe profits but *little* in compariſon with *Godlineſs*, as to the *entitling* us to Heaven and eternal Life: For God hath been ſo gracious, as not only to *aſſure* us that there *is* a *Heaven* and future *Happineſs*, but he hath alſo promiſed it to us upon certain Terms and Conditions, that ſo by *performing* theſe, we might not only believe that there is a *Heaven*, but alſo be inſpired with a certain *Hope* of *enjoying* it. For upon our performing the *Condition* upon which Heaven is *promiſed* to us, we are veſted with ſuch an *inalienable* Right to it, as we can never be diſſeiſed of; unleſs the God of Truth break his *Word*, which he can never do, until he ceaſes to be God. This therefore is one great Advantage which Religion doth deſign us, to beget in us ſuch a *lively Hope* of that bleſſed Immortality which it *promiſes* to us, as might carry us chearfully through all the *weary* Stages of our *Duty*, and ſupport our Minds under all the *Calamities* of this preſent World. And without all doubt, the *Hope* of Heaven is the *greateſt* Bleſſing that

that we are capable of on this ſide Heaven; for if we had *all* the *World* before us, and *every Pleaſure* of it were *diſtilled to a Quinteſſence* to feaſt our Deſires and entertain our licorice Appetites, what a *poor inconſiderable* Trifle would it be, compared with the Hope of being transformed into the *Likeneſs* of *God*, and dwelling for ever in His *Preſence*, there to ſpend a bliſsful Eternity with *Saints* and *Angels*, *Arch-angels* and *Seraphims*, in one continued *everlaſting* Act of rapturous *Love* and *Joy*? What *mean* things are all the ſickly Joys, the empty, flat, evanid Pleaſures *this* World doth afford us, compared with the raviſhing Pleaſures and divine Contentments that ſpring from ſuch *vaſt* and *mighty* Hopes? This *Hope* of Heaven therefore being ſo highly advantageous to us, God hath therefore *promiſed* it to us upon certain *Terms* and *Conditions*, that ſo we might have a *ſure* Foundation to build our Hope upon; that we might know upon what *Grounds* we are to expect that bleſſed *Reward*, which we could never have done, had God left himſelf *free* to with-hold or beſtow it upon us, according to the *arbitrary*, and, to us, *uncertain* Determinations of his Will, and not bequeathed it to us upon ſuch Conditions by his own *irrevocable* Promiſe. That therefore which gives us a Right to Heaven, and is the only *true*

Ground

Ground of our Hopes of it, is our performing the *Condition* upon which it is promiſed to us; and the Condition upon which it is promiſed to us, is nothing leſs than *true* and *univerſal* Godlineſs. And hence the Apoſtle tells us, that *without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord*, Heb. xii. 14. and our Saviour, in *Matth.* v. reſtrains the Beatitudes of the other World to thoſe that are *poor in Spirit*, and *pure in Heart*, that are *benign* and *merciful*, that *hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs*, and that endure the unjuſt Perſecutions of the World with Chriſtian Patience, and Courage, and Conſtancy. And the Promiſe of eternal Life is limited by the Apoſtle to thoſe *who by patient continuance in well-doing, ſeek for glory, and honour, and immortality*, Rom. ii. 7. And if *Godlineſs* be the *ſole Condition* of eternal Life, then it neceſſarily follows, that all our *bodily* Exerciſes in Religion do no farther conduce to *entitle* us to it, than as they conduce to make us *godly* and *vertuous*; which if they do not effect, they give us no more *Right* to Heaven, or *Ground* to hope for it, than the moſt *indifferent* Actions in the World. Hence our Saviour hath told us before hand, that we may know what to truſt to, *Not every one that ſaith unto me Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven*, Matth. vii. 21.

vii. 21. that is, not every one that *profeſſes* my Name, and *acknowledges* me for his Lord and Maſter, and makes ſolemn *Prayers* and *Addreſſes* to me, ſhall be admitted into the Kingdom of Happineſs; ſuch *outward bodily* Exerciſes as theſe will never *entitle* any Man unto that bleſſed Condition: Tho' you ſhould *profeſs* my Name never ſo ſolemnly, and *pray* to me with never ſo much Fervor and Earneſtneſs, yet do not think I will be brib'd by ſuch Trifles to connive at your *Sins*, and admit you into Heaven notwithſtanding all your *Impieties*; no, no; I do aſſure you before hand, that you may know what to truſt to, that there is nothing but your *ſincere* Submiſſion unto the Will of my Father, ſhall ever perſwade me to receive you into his *heavenly* Kingdom. Let us not therefore flatter our ſelves any longer with vain Expectances of Heaven, upon the account of our *bodily* Religion; for unleſs our Natures are *chang'd*, and our Minds *reformed* and *better'd* by it, we may as well lay *claim* to Heaven becauſe we *eat* and *drink* and *ſleep*, as becauſe we *pray*, and *hear*, and *receive* Sacraments: For tho' theſe *bodily* Exerciſes are profitable *Means* to entitle us to Heaven, yet it is only upon this Account, becauſe they are *Means* to make us *good*; but if they do not effect *this*, they are all but ſo many *inſignificant* Cyphers. He there-

fore

fore that builds his Hope of Heaven meerly upon *bodily* Religion, builds upon a *ſandy Foundation*, which if he finally truſt to, will ſink under him, and bury him in eternal Ruins.

4. And laſtly, *Bodily* Exerciſe profits but *little* in compariſon with *Godlineſs*, as to the *qualifying* us for Heaven; which is a diſtinct Conſideration from the former. For ſuppoſing we could have a *Right* to Heaven, without being *diſpoſed* and *qualify'd* for it, it would be no Advantage at all to us; for before we can *enjoy* Heaven, our *Minds* muſt be *reconciled* to the Pleaſures and Delights of it, or elſe it is impoſſible they ſhould be *Pleaſures* to us. Now in the Temper of every wicked Mind there is a *natural* Antipathy unto all thoſe *pure* and *ſpiritual* Joys wherewith the *heavenly* State abounds, which being *pure*, and *chaſte*, and *refined*, can never agree with the *vitiated* Palate of a *baſe degenerate* Soul. For what Concord can there be between *ſpiteful* and *deviliſh* Spirits, and the Fountain of all *Love* and *Goodneſs*? between *ſenſual* and *carnalized* Souls that underſtand no other Pleaſures but only thoſe of the *Fleſh*, and thoſe *pure* and *virgin* Spirits that never eat nor drink, but live for ever upon *Wiſdom*, and *Holineſs*, and *Love*, and *Contemplation*? How could I be happy in *ſeeing* that God, whom I cannot

love;

love; in *converſing* with thoſe Spirits, whoſe Genius and Temper I *abhor*; and in being for ever employed in thoſe heavenly *Exerciſes*, to which I have the greateſt Averſation; no, no; till I am of the ſame *Diſpoſition* with thoſe celeſtial Inhabitants, and my *Mind* is contempered to the heavenly State, it is impoſſible that *Heaven* and *I* ſhould ever agree; and I may as well ſee without Eyes, or hear without Ears, as *enjoy* Heaven without a Heavenly *Diſpoſition*. For as to the main, we ſhall be of the *ſame* Temper of *Mind* when we come into the *other* World, as we are of while we continue in *this*, it being unimaginable how our *Diſpoſition* ſhould be totally *changed* meerly by paſſing out of one World into another; and therefore as in *this* World it is *Likeneſs* that doth *congregate* and *aſſociate* Beings together, ſo doubtleſs it is in the *other* too: ſo that if we carry thither with us our wicked deviliſh *Diſpoſitions*, (as we ſhall doubtleſs do, unleſs we ſubdue and mortify them here) there will be no *Company* fit for us to *aſſociate* with, but only the Devils, and damned Ghoſts of wicked Men; with whom our wretched Spirits being *already* joined by a *Likeneſs* of Nature, will be forced to congregate, as ſoon as ever they are excommunicated from the Society of Mortals. For whither ſhould they flock but to the Birds

of their own Feather? Where ſhould they join *Society*, but with thoſe malignant Spirits to whom they are joined already by a *Community* of *Natures*? For ſuppoſing that when they are landed in Eternity, it were left to their own *Liberty* to go either to Heaven or Hell; yet Heaven would be no Place for them, the Air of that bright Empire of *eternal Day* would never agree with their *black* and *helliſh* Natures; for alas! what ſhould they do among thoſe bleſſed Souls that inhabit it, to whoſe *Godlike* Natures, *divine* Converſations, and *heavenly* Employments, they have the greateſt *Repugnancy* and *Averſation*? From hence therefore it is apparent, that to our *comfortable* Poſſeſſion of Heaven it is not only neceſſary we ſhould have a *Right* to it, but alſo that we ſhould be *prepared* and *qualified* for it; and as to this, all our *bodily* Exerciſes in Religion are no farther profitable than as they are *effectual Means* of true ſubſtantial *Godlineſs*. For when the *Soul* goes out of this *Body*, it muſt leave all this *bodily* Religion behind it, and carry nothing with it into Eternity, but only thoſe divine *Virtues* and heavenly *Diſpoſitions*, which by the Means of this *bodily* Religion it did here acquire. For our *outward* Profeſſions and *bodily* Severities and Paſſions, our *praying*, and *hearing*, and *receiving* of Sacraments, are all but Scaffolds

to

to this heavenly Building of *inward* Purity and Goodneſs; and when once this is finiſhed for Eternity, then muſt theſe Scaffolds go down as Things of no farther *Uſe* or *Neceſſity*. But as for the Graces of the *Mind*, they ſhall ſtand for ever as the only *fit* Habitations of the *heavenly* Pleaſures; and therefore 'tis impoſſible that theſe our *bodily* Exerciſes ſhould formally diſpoſe our *Souls* for Heaven, ſince in Heaven they ſhall wholly *ceaſe*. For altho' our *Love* and *Joy*, and all our *ſweeter Affections*, ſhall there be kept in everlaſting *Exerciſe*, yet ſhall they be wholly *refined* from all *bodily* Paſſion, becauſe there we ſhall be ſtript into *naked* and *unbodied* Spirits. Our *Love* ſhall unite our *Wills* to God and the whole Choir of bleſſed Spirits, without any *Warmth* of Spirit, or *Expanſions* of Heart. Our *Joy* being purely the Jubilee of our *Minds* and the Recreation of our *Reaſon*, ſhall flow without Shouts or Noiſes in a moſt *ſweet* but *ſilent* Current; and the whole Scene of our *Happineſs* ſhall be tranſacted on the Stage of our *Reaſon*. There being therefore no room for *bodily* Exerciſe in this heavenly State, it is impoſſible we ſhould be *qualified* by it for the *Enjoyment* of Heaven; but doubtleſs, our *Fitneſs* for Heaven muſt conſiſt in ſuch *inherent Qualities* of Mind as ſeparate Souls may carry to Heaven with them; and what

theſe are, may be eaſily concluded by conſidering what the *Employment* of Heaven is; which, ſo far as we are given to underſtand of it, conſiſts in *contemplating* and *adoring* the Divinity, and in *converſing* with thoſe pure and bleſſed Spirits that dwell for ever in his Preſence. Now to make us *fit* for ſuch an *Employment*, the *only neceſſary* Qualities of Mind are an univerſal *Love*, and a profound *Humility*, which two are the *fundamental* Vertues of Religion, of which all the other Vertues are ſo many different *Operations*. 'Tis true, our *Love* and *Humility* will not have all the *ſame* Operations in the *other* World as they have in *this*, becauſe there we ſhall not have the *ſame* Occaſions for them; for being placed above all *Sufferings* in the Enjoyment of the moſt *perfect* Good, we ſhall have no occaſion either for the *paſſive* Vertues of *Patience*, and *Meekneſs*, and *Forgiveneſs* of Injuries; nor yet for thoſe *active* Vertues which ſpeak us diſtant from our Happineſs, ſuch as *Faith* and *Hope*, which ſhall be ſwallow'd up in *Viſion* and *Fruition*. But tho' in that *bleſſed* State we ſhall have no occaſion to expreſs our *Love* and *Humility* in ſuch Acts as theſe, yet without theſe two great Vertues we ſhall be no ways *capable* of the *heavenly* Employment; for what Pleaſure can we take in *contemplating* the Being of God, if we do not

love

love Him? Doubtleſs our own *Antipathy* to the *Goodneſs* and *Purity* of His Nature will either avert our Eyes from *beholding* him, or render the Sight of him *horrible* and *dreadful* to us. And if we do not *contemplate* him with an *humble* and *lowly* Mind, the *Sight* of his ſupereminent Perfections will either provoke our *Envy* or *Contempt*, make us *pine* to ſee our ſelves out-ſhone by him, or *contemn* his Glories out of an overweening Opinion of our own. Again, if we do not *love* God, we cannot *adore* him with a *free* and *chearful* Mind; and if we are *proud* and *ſelf-conceited*, inſtead of *God* we ſhall adore our *Selves*, and become our own *Idols* and *Votaries*. So that without *Humility* and *Love* we ſhall be no ways fit for the *other* part of that ſweet Employment which conſiſts in *converſing* with holy and bleſſed Spirits; for *their* Converſation being wholly regulated by the ſacred Laws of *wiſe* and *holy* Friendſhip, and conſiſting in an everlaſting Intercourſe of *chaſte* and *mutual* Indearments; no Soul can be *capable* of bearing a *Part* in it that is not inſpired with univerſal *Love* and great *Humility*; both which are *indiſpenſibly* neceſſary to every *wiſe* and *friendly* Converſation: For where *Humility* is wanting, every Trifle will *offend*; and where *Charity* is wanting, every Offence will kindle an unquenchable *Diſcord*. So that a

proud malicious Nature can converſe no where with Satisfaction, much leſs with thoſe bleſſed Souls, in whoſe moſt *pure* and *perfect* Friendſhip there is not the leaſt Intermixture either of *Flattery* or *Envy*; for being all perfectly *good* and perfectly *happy*, they can neither *over-value* themſelves, nor *envy* what another enjoys; ſo that in all *their* Converſation there is no Entertainment either for *Pride* or *Malice*, but on the contrary there is nothing but what is *diſtaſteful* to them: for where there are none that *over-value* either themſelves or others, but every one loves every one with a *ſincere* and *inviolable* Friendſhip, there can be no Converſation but what is *diſtaſteful* to an *arrogant* and *malicious* Temper. What then ſhould a *proud malignant* Spirit do among thoſe *happy* Beings, a great Part of whoſe Heaven conſiſts in *rejoycing* in *each others* Happineſs? Doubtleſs could ſuch a Spirit be admitted into their Society, their Bliſs would ſo *enrage* its Envy, their Perfection ſo *upbraid* its Baſeneſs, that it would find nothing but Cauſes of *Diſcontent* in a Converſation ſo *diſagreeable* to its Nature: ſo that without univerſal *Love* and *profound* Humility, there is nothing in Heaven that we can *enjoy*; there being *no Employment* in that bleſſed State that is *agreeable* to the Genius of a *proud* and *malicious* Mind. So that unleſs

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our *bodily* Religion doth make us *really good* by begetting in us thoſe heavenly Vertues of *Humility* and *Love*, it is altogether *impertinent* as to the diſpoſing of us for Heaven; and after all our *faſting*, and *praying*, and *hearing*, and *receiving* of Sacraments, we ſhall be found as remote from Heaven, and as unprepared for it, as if we had ſpent our time in gathering Cockles, or telling the Sands upon the Sea-ſhore. So that tho' this *bodily* Exerciſe be highly *uſeful* and *neceſſary* to our Reformation and Amendment, and is in it ſelf a very *conducive Means* to *internal* Holineſs and Goodneſs; yet compared with *Godlineſs* it ſelf, wherein our *Holineſs* and *Goodneſs* doth conſiſt, it is of very *little* Account, either as to the *reconciling* us to God, or the *perfecting* our Natures, or to the *entitling* us to Heaven, or *qualifying* us for it.

Now from hence we may learn, what the *true* End is of *external* and *bodily* Religion: It is not required for its *own* ſake without any farther End or Intention, but for the ſake of *Godlineſs*, which is the *ultimate* Mark at which it ought to be levelled and directed. And therefore as he that would build an Houſe muſt make uſe of the *Means*, the *Tools* and *Materials* of Building; but if he think to build the Houſe *meerly* by uſing

theſe Means, by cutting the Wood and carving the Stone, without any farther Aim or Intention, he will find himſelf extreamly miſtaken: ſo he that would be *godly* muſt uſe the *Means* of Godlineſs; he muſt *profeſs* the true Religion, and *pray*, and *hear*, and *receive* Sacraments; but he that thinks he is *godly* meerly becauſe he uſes theſe *Means*, tho' he doth not at all concern himſelf to direct them unto the great *End* for which they were deſigned, doth but *deceive* and *abuſe* his own Soul. For, for God's ſake, what doth it ſignify for a Man to *pray* in his Family, and afterwards to go and *cheat* in his Shop? to keep the Lord's Day ſtrictly, and play the Knave all the Week after? What doth it avail for a Man to *hear* the Word of God, if he make no Conſcience of *obeying* it? to receive the Sacrament of *Charity*, if he ſtill retain *Hatred* and *Ill-will* to his Neighbour? Do we think that God is ſo fond of theſe *inſtrumental* Duties of Religion, as for *their* ſakes to diſpenſe with theſe *groſs* and *fulſome* Immoralities? No, no; theſe are things only fit to cheat Children and Fools withal. But let us not imagine, that the *wiſe and holy God* will be ſo impoſed upon; that when he hath ordained theſe *Duties* only as the *Means* of acquiring that univerſal *Purity* and *Goodneſs* which he principally *intends* and *requires*, he will be con-

contented *barely* with your uſing theſe *Means*, whether the great Ends for which he deſigned them be ever obtained by you or no. If you ſhould enjoin your Servant to copy out ſuch a Letter or Manuſcript, and for that End ſhould require him to uſe Pen, Ink, and Paper; would you not think him extreamly abſurd or inſolent, ſhould he come and ſhew you a large inſignificant Scribble, and tell you that according to your Command he had uſed the Pen, Ink, and Paper, tho' indeed he had not tranſcribed one Word with them of what you did command and enjoin him? And yet thus *rudely* and *inſolently* do you deal by God, who place *all* your Religion in the *inſtrumental* Duties of it. God doth require of you that you ſhould copy out his *Juſtice*, *Purity*, and *Goodneſs*, and tranſcribe them into your *own* Natures; and in order to your doing of this, he hath preſcribed you certain *Means* and *Inſtruments*, ſuch as *Prayer*, and *Hearing*, and *receiving* of Sacraments; and when you come to give him an account of that mighty Task he hath enjoined you, you ſhew him an inſignificant *Flouriſh* of Religion, and have nothing to ſay for your ſelves but that according to his Appointment you have *prayed*, and *heard*, and *received* Sacraments; but you muſt confeſs that with all theſe you have not tranſcribed one Tittle or *Iota* of that

Purity

Purity and *Holiness* which he required at your hands. Is this a *proper* account, do you think, to be given to the *wise* and *holy* Soveraign of the World? Would you be thus mocked by your own Servants? and dare you presume thus to mock the great God, between *whom* and *you* there is infinitely a greater distance than between *you* and the *meanest* Vassal about you? In the Name of God, for what End do you pray? Is it to *please* him with a fine Speech, or an humble and eloquent Address? or is it to *perswade* him by your fawning Submissions to befriend you in all your Wickedness and Rebellion against him? If *either* of these be your Aims, I must plainly tell you, you were as good save your Breath for some other purpose; but if you pray to him upon a *sincere* Design, to affect your Minds with an *awful Sense* of God, and to obtain of him *Grace* to enable you to repent and amend, and for *Pardon* and *Mercy* upon your unfeigned Repentance; then your *Prayer* must necessarily make you more *meek*, and *humble*, and *industrious* to please him by a *free* and *generous* Obedience. To what purpose do you come to *hear* the Word of God? Do you think it gratifies the Almighty that you will please to give him the *Hearing*? or that you meet in the publick Assemblies to furnish your Heads with *Notions*

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and your Tongues with *Diſcourſe*? If this be your Opinion, I muſt needs tell you, you have very *mean* Apprehenſions of God, to think him a Being capable to be pleaſed with ſuch a *mean* and *inconſiderable* Trifle: but, if you come with *humble*, *honeſt*, and *teachable* Minds to *learn* the Will of God in order to your *obeying* it, your *hearing* will neceſſarily lead you to the *Practice* of all thoſe excellent Virtues which God requires at your hands. What do you deſign when you *receive* the Sacrament? is it to pleaſe God with offering *Vows* to him, which you do not mean to *perform*, to pacify him with a ſhort Pang of *religious Paſſion*, with ſhedding a few *Tears* over your bleeding Saviour; or to get your *Pardon* ſealed with the Blood of the Covenant without *Repentance* and *Reformation*? If ſo, I muſt needs tell you, you *receive* the Sacrament to no other purpoſe, but only to *deceive* and *abuſe* your own Souls. But if you come with an *honeſt* Deſign to *remember* the great things that your Saviour hath done for you; to *excite* your Love to him with the Spectacle of his Paſſion, and to *renew* your Communion with the Saints, and your Vows of Obedience unto God; you will then infallibly be made *better* by it, and be more and more accompliſh'd in every part of *true* and *real* Goodneſs. So that unleſs we perform this *outward*

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and *bodily* Religion to the Purpoſes of *true Godlineſs*, we perform it to no purpoſe at all. Let me therefore beſeech you, even for God's ſake and your own Souls, do not reſt in this *bodily* Religion, think not that you have done *enough*, when you have *faſted* and *prayed*, *heard* and *received* Sacraments; for if you do, you are ſhort of your *Duty*, and will infallibly fall ſhort of the *Reward* of it. Theſe Things indeed we muſt by no means *neglect*, they being the neceſſary *Means* and *Inſtruments* of our Reformation; but if we do not uſe them as *ſuch*, we take a great deal of Pains to no purpoſe; if they do not render us more *humble* and *charitable*, more *ſober* and *heavenly-minded*, we have ſpent all our Labour in vain, and in the End ſhall have no other *Reward* for it but the Portion of *Hypocrites* in the Lake of Fire and Brimſtone.

EZEKIEL XVIII. 30.

Repent and turn your ſelves from all your Tranſgreſſions, ſo Iniquity ſhall not be your Ruin.

THE great Deſign of this *Chapter* is to anſwer an Objection which the *Jews* were wont to make againſt the *Righteouſneſs* of God's Procedure with them; *viz.* That he puniſhed them not only for their *own*, but for their *Fathers* Sins. Which Objection, tho' it did not at all impeach the *Righteouſneſs* of God, it being no Injuſtice in Him to inflict temporal Evils upon the *Children* for their *Fathers* Sins; yet that they might urge it no more as a Pretence of Gods *unrighteous* dealing with them, God aſſures them by his *Prophet* that from thenceforth he would *remit* that Right he had to make them ſmart for their *Fathers* Iniquities, and inflict no other Puniſhment upon them than what was due for their own *perſonal* Faults; that if they *did* well, they ſhould *fare* well, notwithſtanding the Sins of their *Parents*; and that if they did *wickedly*, they ſhould ſurely *ſmart* for it, how well ſoever their *Parents* behaved themſelves. Nay, ſays he, your *Fathers*

Fathers Merit or Demerit ſhall henceforth be ſo far from excuſing you *from*, or expoſing you *to* Puniſhment, that you ſhall not ſuffer for your own paſt *Wickedneſs*, if you *repent* of it, nor yet eſcape for your paſt *Righteouſneſs* if you *revolt* from it. This is the Sum of the whole *Chapter* to the 24th Verſe: and yet, ſays he, *the houſe of Iſrael ſays, the way of the Lord is not equal. O houſe of Iſrael are not my ways equal? Are not your ways unequal?* Can any method of *rewarding* and *puniſhing* be more equal than this which I now propoſe? or can any Accuſation be more *injurious* than this of yours againſt me? but know, 'tis not your *unjuſt* reproaches ſhall make me deſiſt from this my moſt *righteous* procedure. *Therefore*, ſays he Verſe the 30th, *I will judge you, O houſe of Iſrael, every one according to his ways*; how much ſoever you reproach and calumniate me, I will ſtrictly inſiſt upon this method of *rewarding* and *Puniſhing* you according as you repent of, or perſevere in your Iniquities; and to let you ſee that I will be as ready to *reward* you upon the *former*, as to *puniſh* you upon the *latter*, do but for once make a tryal of me, *repent and turn your ſelves from all your tranſgreſſions*, and you ſhall ſurely find that *your* paſt *iniquity ſhall not be your ruine.* The ſenſe of which Words reſolves into two Propoſitions:

1. That

1. That the *Iniquity* of any People or Nation tends directly to their *Ruine.*

2. That true *Repentance* and *Amendment* is the certain way to prevent the *Ruine* which *Iniquity* tends to.

I begin with the firſt, that the *Iniquity* of any People or Nation tends directly to their Ruine: *So it ſhall not* — intimating that if they did not *repent* their Iniquity would certainly end in their Ruine. And of the *Truth* of this the conſtant Experience of all *Ages* is a ſufficient Teſtimony; for if you conſult either ſacred or prophane *Hiſtory*, you will find that *Iniquity*, like the Worm at the root of *Jonah's* gourd, hath many times blaſted the moſt flouriſhing *Kingdoms*, pulled down their *Banks*, and laid them open to ſuch *Inundations* of Miſery, as have finally *overwhelm'd* and *deſtroy'd* them. And thoſe that have made the ſtricteſt Enquiries into humane Affairs have conſtantly obſerved that the *Riſe* and *Fall* of Nations hath been more owing to their *Virtue* and *Vice* than to any other Cauſe, and that upon theſe two Hinges generally the Fates of *Empires* turn; that the Foundations of their *Riſe* were laid in *vertuous*, *brave*, and *generous* Actions, and that by *Wickedneſs* and *Corruption* of Manners they were *undermined*, and ſunk into a *final* Ruine. But the Truth of this will yet more fully appear by conſider-

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ing how many ways *Vice* doth contribute to the *Ruine* and *Deſtruction* of a Kingdom; all which I ſhall reduce to theſe eight Heads:

1. It doth it by depriving Kingdoms and Nations of the *Favour* and *Protection* of God.

2. By inflicting poſitive *Plagues* and *Puniſhments* upon them.

3. By corrupting and infatuating their *Counſels.*

4. By melting and emaſculating their *Courage.*

5. By breaking and diſturbing their *Order.*

6. By diſſolving their *Unity* and *Concord.*

7. By conſuming their *Wealth* and *Subſtance.*

8. By debaſing their *Eſteem* and *Reputation.*

1. *Wickedneſs* directly tends to the *Ruine* of Kingdoms and Nations, as it deprives them of the *Divine* Favour and Protection. For if we acknowledge *God* to be the *Almighty Lord* and *Soveraign* of the World, we cannot but confeſs that the *Strength* and *Eſtabliſhment* of Kingdoms is founded in *His* Favour and Protection; that his *Goodneſs, Wiſdom,* and *Power* are the Pillars upon which thoſe vaſt and mighty *Structures* lean; and

and conſequently that if he withdraw from them thoſe neceſſary Supports, they cannot ſtand, but muſt inevitably ſink under their own Weight into irreparable *Ruines*. For *nothing* can ſubſiſt without God, and much leſs *Kingdoms* and *Nations* which have ſo many Principles of Corruption lurking within their own Bowels, and in which there are compounded ſo many *boiſterous* Paſſions, *repugnant* Humors, *inconſiſtent* Deſigns and *conteſting* Intereſts; all which like the contrary *Qualities* of our Bodies do by their mutual *jarring* with one another continually tend to the Diſſolution of the whole. So that did not the *wiſe* and *Almighty* Providence of God continually ſuperintend theſe *contrary* Principles, and by its *skilful* mingling them with one another, preſerve them in a *juſt* and *due* Temper, thoſe great and unweildy Bodies in which they do reſide, would be every moment in danger of being *diſeaſed*, *corrupted* and *deſtroyed* by them. But now the *Sins* of Nations do mightily contribute to the *depriving* them of this *Benefit* of Gods Providence and Protection; for how can any Kingdom or Nation expect that *God* will continue to protect them in their *Rebellions* againſt Himſelf? that he who is ſo *implacable* an Enemy of *wickedneſs*, and ſo *zealous* an Aſſertor of his own *Honour* and *Authority*, will employ his Power to

patronize them in the *one*, and take their part againſt the *other*: and if he *withdraw* his upholding Providence from a Nation, he needs do *no more*; for now it *muſt* ſink of its own accord, and like a *falling* Houſe, when its prop is removed, its Weight will bear it down and quickly cruſh it into Ruines.

2. *Wickedneſs* tends to the *Ruine* of Kingdoms and Nations not only by engaging God to *withdraw* his Protection from, but alſo to *inflict* poſitive *Plagues* and *Puniſhments* upon them. For *God* being the ſupreme *Soveraign* of the World, and eſpecially of this World of Men who are ſo extreamly *prone* to contemn and violate the Laws of his *Government*, it is neceſſary that ſince our *Hopes* and *Fears* are the maſterſprings of all our Motions, he ſhould take eſpecial Care, as on the one hand to *allure* us to our Duty by the Hope of *Reward*, ſo on the other to *awe* us into it by the Fear of *Puniſhment*; and if he ſhould not, there would be no confining ſuch extravagant Creatures, as we are, within any Rule or Compaſs. Now as for *particular* Offenders, the great Scene of God's *Rewarding* and *Puniſhing* them is the *future* State, where every Man muſt anſwer for himſelf and receive the juſt Retributions of his own Actions; but as for ſinful and vertuous *Nations*, they

they are capable only of being rewarded and puniſhed in *this Life*; there being no ſuch thing as *particular* Nations and Kingdoms in the *Life to come*; where *Heaven* and *Hell* are the two *Nations* into which the Spirits of Men are diſtributed; ſo that if wicked *Nations* were not puniſhed *here* as ſuch, they could never be puniſhed at all. And if there were no *ſuch Puniſhments* ſet up like *Banks* and *Shores* to break the Inſolence and check the overflowing *Wickedneſs* of Sinners, the whole World would ſoon become a *Sink* and *Deluge* of Iniquity: and therefore tho' here God many times ſpares *particular Offenders*, there being a *future* State in which he can reckon with them and call them to a ſtrict account for all their Affronts and Provocations; yet 'tis very rare, if ever, that he ſuffers wicked Nations to go unpuniſhed here; becauſe if he ſhould, as ſuch they would eſcape for ever. And how would it *weaken* the *Government* of the World, if when God ſees a People confederate againſt him, blow the Trumpets of *Rebellion* and gather into *Armies* to urge war againſt him, he ſhould ſit ſtill with his hands in his boſom and take no notice of it? for tho' among Men the *Multitude* of *Offenders* be many times the Cauſe of their *Impunity*, becauſe of the *Weakneſs* of *Humane Governments* which are glad to ſpare, where

they are not ſtrong enough to *puniſh*; yet in the Government of *God* things are quite otherwiſe: no Combination of Sinners is too hard for *Him*, and the *greater* and more *numerous* the *Offenders* are, the more his *Juſtice* is concerned to vindicate the Affront. However therefore God may paſs by ſingle Sinners in this world, yet when a *Nation* combines againſt him, *when hand joins in hand, the wicked ſhall not go unpuniſhed.*

3. *Wickedneſs* tends to the *Ruine* of Kingdoms and Nations as it contributes to the corrupting and infatuating of their *Counſels.* For *Vice* and *Wickedneſs* doth very much depreſs the Minds, and weaken the *Underſtandings* of Men; it doth ſo *warp* their Judgments, and caſt ſuch miſts of *Prejudice* around their Reaſon, that they are not able to diſcern the *Iſſues* and Conſequents of things; for when they are overpowered by their *Luſts*, their Affections will *miſlead* their Minds, and impoſe upon them for Truth and Realities their own unreaſonable Wiſhes and Deſires: And when we *adviſe* in the midſt of a Company of head-ſtrong *Paſſions* and *Appetites*, we are like *Rehoboam* amongſt his young and *hair-brain'd Counſellors*, who repreſented things to him not as they were in themſelves, but according *to his own* Deſires and Inclinations. And when the *Counſels* of a Nation are ſteered by its own *vicious* Affections,

fections, that will moſt commonly ſeem *beſt* which is moſt unreaſonable, and ſo *Storms* will many times be miſtaken for Calms, and Rocks for ſafe and quiet Harbours. No Man is fit to counſel for a *publick Good* but he that is led by *ſimple* and *unbiaſſed* Reaſon, becauſe he only will attend *impartially* to the Reaſons of things, and *accommodate* his Advices to the publick Neceſſities and Exigencies of Affairs; but when the Man himſelf is governed by any unreaſonable *Appetite* or *Affection*, that will ever and anon *intermingle* with this Judgment and *biaſs* his counſels towards its own unreaſonable Deſires and Inclinations. And when ſuch blind Affections as *Pride* and *Ambition*, *Covetouſneſs* and *Revenge* ſit at the ſtern, and are the Pilots and Steer-men of a Kingdom; how can it be expected but that in the midſt of ſo many *Rocks* and *Quick-ſands* that ſurround it, it ſhould run a ground, or be ſplit in pieces?

4. *Wickedneſs* tends to the *Ruine* of Kingdoms and Nations as it contributes to *melt* and *emaſculate* their *Courage*. For tho' it cannot be denied, but that the *Valour* and *Courage* of Nations is very much owing to the temper of the *Climes* in which they are ſituate, yet 'tis evident that as *People* of the moſt effeminate *Climes* have by *Vertue* been improved into *heroick* and *magnanimous*, as the

Romans and *Perſians* for inſtance; ſo thoſe of the moſt *hardy* and *courageous Climes* have many times by their *diſſolute* Manners been broken and diſpirited into the moſt wretched *Cowards* and *Poultroons*; as the *Engliſh* for inſtance, who tho' they have been ever remarked for a *People* of a *daring* and *undaunted Genius*, yet have ſometimes been ſo melted by their own *Softneſs* and *Luxury*, as that they became Preys to every *Dog* that hunted them. And indeed *Softneſs*, *Luxury*, and *Wantonneſs*, are Vices that will effeminate the Spirits and ſpoil the ſtrain of the moſt *valorous Nation*; for as Vertues are increaſed by Exerciſe, ſo they ſhrink and decay by Inactivity, and there is no State of Life that doth ſo *fetter* our Courage and *reſtrain* its Vigour and Activity, as that of *Idleneſs* and *Luxury*; in which after it hath ſtewed and diſſolved a while it will convert into the greateſt *Baſeneſs* and *Puſillanimity*: for an *intemperate* Bowl, a Bed of *Sloth* and a *Dalilah*'s Lap are Charms ſufficient to *effeminate* a *Heroe*, and bewitch a Lyon into a timorous Hare. And as theſe *particular Vices* do naturally diſcourage a Nation, ſo Vice in general hath the ſame Effect; for it naturally impreſſes a ſenſe of *Guilt* upon the Mind, which fills it with ſuch *Fears* and *Horrors* as cannot but *weaken* and *diſpirit* the hardieſt and moſt daring Courage

rage. For how can a Man be *courageous* that is continually ſtung with the Remorſes, and haunted with the reſtleſs *Furies* of his own guilty Mind; that carries a *Hell* within his own Boſom, and hath a thouſand Guilts, like ſo many grim and ghaſtly Devils, continually ſtaring him in the Face? Certainly ſuch an One muſt either lay by his *Reaſon* or his *Courage*, and become a *Coward* or ceaſe to be a Man. Hence it is ſaid, *The wicked fleeth when no man purſueth, but the righteous is bold as a Lyon*, Prov. 28. 1. And when a Nation is thus diſpirited by their own *Luſts* and *Guilts*, then are they ripe for *Ruine*, and fit to be made a prey for every *Nimrod* that will hunt and invade them.

5. *Wickedneſs* tends to the *Ruine* of Kingdoms and Nations, as it breaks and diſſolves their *Union*. For as true *Religion* knits mens Hearts together by the indiſſoluble *Ligaments* of mutual *Love* and *Charity*, as it heals their *Spirits*, and corrects their Paſſions, and inſpires their Natures with all thoſe obliging *Graces* upon which the *Peace* and *Concord* of Society is founded; ſo on the contrary, *Vice* and *Wickedneſs* tends and divides the hearts of men, ſows ſeeds of Diſcord in their Natures, frets and inflames their Spirits againſt one another, and impregnates them with ſuch *rude* and *barbarous* Paſſions as do naturally render them *unſociable* to

each other; ſuch as are *Pride* and *Ambition*, *Envy* and *Malice*, *Covetouſneſs* and *Revenge*, which naturally tend to the *Diſſolution* of *Society*, and the cutting in ſunder all the cords of *Friendſhip* and good *Neighbourhood*. Hence is that of St. *James*, Chap. iv. 1. *From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your luſts that war in your members.* Yea doubtleſs this is the Cauſe of all thoſe *Diſcords* that ſpoil the Harmony of this *Moral* World, the *Pandora*'s Box out of which have ſwarmed all thoſe *Strifes* and *Contentions*, *Broils*, and *Confuſions* that have *deſtroyed* and *ruined* many flouriſhing Kingdoms. For tho' the moſt turbulent *Factions* are uſually faced with *zeal* for God, yet if you look beyond the *Outſide*, you will always find that moſt of the *Broils* that have been conducted under the diſplay'd Banners of *Religion* have been raiſed and led on by the *Deviliſh Paſſions* of thoſe who have been the moſt zealous *Sticklers* for and *Fomentors* of them. Thus *Vice*, you ſee, doth naturally divide a Nation; and teares the Members of it in ſunder; and our *Saviour* aſſures us that when *a Kingdom is divided againſt it ſelf*, it is ſoon *brought to deſolation*, Matthew xii. 25. For thoſe *Diviſions* do mightily impair the *ſtrength* of a *Kingdom*, which like an impetuous Stream being parted into ſeveral

veral *Currents* runs with far leſs force, and is much more eaſily forded. And when once a Nation is torn and ſeparated into *Factions*, it is at beſt but like a *Confederate Army*, which tho' it be united into one Body hath ſeveral *contrary Intereſts* and *Deſigns* which divides their counſels and makes them *ſuſpitious* of one another, and ſo leſs able to withſtand the force of an *united* Enemy; and in theſe circumſtances what can be expected but that either they ſhould fall out among themſelves and ſheath their ſwords in one anothers bowels, or be made an eaſie prey to the power and rapine of their common *Adverſary*?

6. *Wickedneſs* tends to the *Ruine* of Kingdoms and Nations, as it diſturbs them in their *Order* and regular *Adminiſtration*. For as *Religion* lays the Foundations of all good *Order* in a Kingdom, as it obliges the *Governours* to all thoſe regular vertues that make them publick Beſſings, to *Juſtice* and *Liberality*, to *Truth* and *Mercy*, to *Conſtancy* and *Magnanimity*; as it binds the ſubordinate *Inſtruments* and *Miniſters* of *State* to *Fidelity* and *Diligence* as it ingages the Subjects to honour and reverence, to obey and ſubmit to their *Governours*; ſo on the contrary, *Vice* and *Wickedneſs* when it hath inſinuated it ſelf into a *Nation*, *ſubverts* the whole Order of it, and miſerably confounds the Courſe of

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its *Adminiſtration*: it introduces into the *Government Oppoſition* and *Tyranny*, *Fraud* and *Cruelty*, *Cowardize* and *Inconſtancy*; it perverts the *Miniſters* of it into *Traytors* and *Robbers*, and turns its *Courts* of *Juſtice* into dens of *Thieves*; it alienates the *Subjects* from their Duty and *Allegiance*, makes them *heady* and *high-minded*, *rude* and *pragmatical*, *factious* and *ungovernable*; and in a word, ſpreads ſuch a poiſonous *Contagion* over all the vital Parts of a Nation, as, without a ſpeedy Cure, muſt neceſſarily end in the *Ruine* and *Deſolation* of the whole. For ſuch univerſal *Diſorders* are as the *Symptoms* of *Death* upon a Nation, and like thoſe *gentler* Convulſions within the Bowels of the *Earth* do portend the Approach of ſome dreadful *Earthquake*. And as when the whole maſs of Blood and Humors is corrupted, the Body is ſick unto Death, and will putrefy apace into a *Carkaſs*; thus when a *Kingdom* is thus *univerſally* diſordered, when as the *Prophet expreſſes* it, *the whole head is ſick and the whole heart is faint*, when from the crown of the head to the ſole of the foot there is no *Soundneſs* in it, but all is covered *with wounds* and *bruiſes* and *putrefying ſores*; what can be expected but a *ſpeedy* and a *fatal* Period?

7. *Wickedneſs* tends to the *Ruine* of Kingdoms and Nations, as it conſumes their Wealth and Subſtance. Whilſt *Vertue* and *Religion*

Religion do bear ſway in a Nation; to be-ſure it is of a *frugal* and *induſtrious Genius*, the *People* will attend to their *own* Buſineſs and not be *intermedling* pragmatically in anothers *Dioceſe*; They will enjoy themſelves within the *Bounds* of Modeſty and Sobriety, and make a conſcience of *out-ſpending* their *Fortunes*, and living above their proper *Ranks* and *Degrees* in the World. And whilſt every *Member* thus acts within its *proper Sphere*, the *Nation* cannot but *thrive* and *proſper*, each one by his honeſt *Frugality* and *Induſtry* being enabled upon all occaſions to contribute to the Defence and Support of the *Publick*. But when once *Vice* and *Wickedneſs* have thruſt out *Vertue* and overſpread the Nation, it introduces in its room ſo many *coſtly*, *chargeable*, and *prodigal Luſts*, as will ſoon *exhauſt* its Wealth, and ſuck the Blood out of its *Veins*. Then in comes *Idleneſs*, and like a *Drone* lives upon the acqueſts of *Induſtry*: Then *Pride* begins to ſpread her *Peacocks* train, and flaunt out what *Frugality* had ſaved, in gorgeous Apparel and ſumptuous Furniture. Then *Drunkenneſs* and *Gluttony* begin to call out for *Meat* and *Drink* offerings to their God, *the Belly*; and *Luſt* and *Wantonneſs* to crave Proviſions to feed and pamper their inſatiate *Appetites*: in a word, then comes in ſuch a Pack of greedy *Hell-hounds* to devour the Fruits of

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our paſt *Frugality* and *Induſtry*, as are ſufficient to drain and exhauſt the *Indies*. And when there are ſo many *Locuſts* ſwarming in every corner of the *Land*, what can be expected but that at laſt they ſhould eat up every *green* Thing, and devour the *Fruits* of every Tree? For we may maintain whole *Fleets* and *Armies* at a cheaper rate than a few extravagant *Luſts*, and let but *Pride* and *Idleneſs*, *Intemperance* and *Wantonneſs* be let looſe, and allowed to ſpunge a while upon a Nation, and in a little time they ſhall more *impoveriſh* and *conſume* its Subſtance, than a long and waſting *War*. And when the *Wealth* of a Nation which is the *vital Blood* that runs and circulates about its Veins and Arteries, is thus continually ſucked by theſe inſatiate *Daughters of the Horſeleech that ſtill cry out Give, Give*; its Life muſt neceſſarily ebb by degrees, and at the laſt it muſt *faint* away and *expire*.

8. And laſtly, *Wickedneſs* tends to the *Ruine* of Kingdoms and Nations, as it impairs and debaſes their *Eſteem* and *Reputation*. *Righteouſneſs exalteth a Nation*, ſaith the Wiſe Man, *but Sin is the reproach of any people*, Prov. xiv. 34. for *Vice* hath ſuch a natural *Baſeneſs* and *Uncomelineſs* in it, that whenever it appears in its own Colours, it creates a mighty *Diſeſteem* of it ſelf in the Minds of all that behold it, and where-

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ever it goes, it carries an *infamous* Character along with it; it *blaſts* the Reputation of its own Votaries, covers their Heads with *Shame* and *Diſhonour*, cauſes them to *rot* above ground, and to *ſtink* alive, and when they are *dead*, writes a *black* and *inglorious* Memory on their Graves. When therefore this *foul* and *noiſome* Leproſy hath ſpread it ſelf over the Face of a *Nation*, it muſt neceſſarily render it a *horrid* and *monſtrous* Spectacle unto all that behold it; and tho' the *Univerſality* of Sin may give it ſome Reputation where its *Throne* and *Empire* is ſeated, and render it *genteel* and *faſhionable* among its own *Slaves* and *Vaſſals*; yet 'tis ſuch a Reputation as hath no bottom to ſupport it. For unleſs my *Honour* be founded in ſome *real Excellency*, it is not in *me*, but in the *Conceit* of him that honours me; his *Fancy* is the *Mint* where all my Reputation is coined, and 'tis at his pleaſure to ſtamp me an *Angel* or a *Devil*. So that tho' *Vice* may ſometimes be in *Vogue* where it is univerſally ſpread and propagated, yet it being a *Vogue* without Foundation, all the Credit it gives is only a *fantaſtick* Being, a thing that is only the *Sport* and *Dalliance* of *vulgar* Breath and *popular* Noiſe; but whilſt its own *blind Votaries* ſing *Hoſanna*'s to it, and ſtrew its way with Palms, all the World beſides exclaim againſt and cry unanimouſly *Cru-*

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cify it, *Crucify* it. So that while it is honored at home, it is vilified abroad, and tho' we may be ſometimes ſo *beſotted* as to reckon it our *Glory*, yet to be ſure all wiſe and indifferent *Judges* will upbraid it to us as our *Shame*. For what *wicked* Nation is there that hath ever eſcaped the *Reproaches* and *Infamy* of Mankind, that hath abandoned it ſelf to *Fraud* and *Treachery*, to *Softneſs* and *Effeminacy*, to *Oppreſſion* and *Cruelty*; and hath not thereupon drawn upon it ſelf the *Scorn* and *Hiſſing* of all the Nations round about it? And when a *People* are grown *cheap* and *deſpicable* in their Neighbours eyes, when their *Faith* is ſuſpected, their *Truth* branded, and their *Virtue* ſtained and blemiſhed, what Support or friendly Intercourſe can they expect from them? Who will *truſt* to their Leagues or Confederacies, or enter into Commerce with them, who have neither *Truth* nor *Juſtice* to ſecure them? for ſo much *Reputation* as a *Nation* loſes, ſo much *Strength* it loſes; for 'tis a mighty *Strength* to a People to be *feared* and *lov'd* by their neighbouring Nations, neither of which they can expect to be when once they have ſunk their *Reputation*; for who will *dread* an *effeminate* People ſoftned with Luxury and Voluptuouſneſs? or who will *love* a *profligate* People diſtained with Cruelty and Falſhood? And when a *People* hath not

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Credit enough to make them either *fear'd* or *lov'd*, if then they are not *ruin'd* and *deſtroy'd*, it is becauſe their *Enemies* either think it not worth the *while*, or are not at *leiſure* to attempt it.

And thus you ſee, how many ways *Wickedneſs* contributes to the *Ruine* of a Nation. So that when *Wickedneſs* hath overſpread a People, and is become their *Epidemical* diſeaſe, it doth not only bode their approaching fate, but haſtens it, and pulls it headlong down upon them; and without a Miracle they muſt reform, or *ſink* or *periſh*. For unleſs God alters the natural *Courſe* of things and hinders neceſſary *Cauſes* from producing their *Effects*, it will be as impoſſible to hinder the *Ruine* of a *Kingdom* that is overwhelmed with *Wickedneſs*, and obſtinately continues ſo, as it is to ſave a *Houſe* from burning that is wrapt and compaſſed round with *Flames*; becauſe the burning of a *Houſe* is not a more neceſſary Effect of the *Flames* that ſurround it, than the Ruine of a *Nation* is of the Sins that overſpread it. *One* way therefore there is left, and only one, for ſuch a *Nation* to ſave it ſelf, and that is by *Repentance*; which brings me to the next Propoſition in the Text, That true *Repentance* and *Amendment* is the certain way to prevent that *Ruine* which our Iniquities threaten. *Repent and turn*

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your ſelves from all your trangreſſions, ſo iniquity ſhall not be your ruin. But before I enter upon this *Propoſition*, I ſhall draw a few practical Inferences from what hath been ſaid.

1. From hence I infer what *plagues* and *nuiſances* wicked Men are to a *Kingdom*, ſince the Tendency of *Sin* in ſo many particulars is ſo very *deſtructive* to its Welfare and Intereſt. Theſe are the grand diſturbers of *Iſrael* the wretched *Incendiaries* that ſet all in Flames and Combuſtions about them; their *Sins* are the *Trains* that do give Fire to thoſe *Mines* of Ruine that ſink and teat up *Kingdoms*, and their Breaſts are the *Seminaries* and *Harbourers* of thoſe *Traitors* that do conſpire againſt and undermine our *Peace* and *Happineſs*. For as for thoſe *Traytors* without, tho' they were a thouſand times if poſſible more *crafty* and *reſtleſs* and *malicious* than they are, we might defy their helliſh Plots and Intreagues, and ſmile at their vain Attempts did not our Sins contribute to make us miſerable; but when we by our own *Wickedneſs* will joyn hands with their reſtleſs *Craft* and *Malice*, aſſiſt them againſt our ſelves and *co-operate* with them to our own deſtruction, what remedy is there for us? when the ſins of our *Friends* are conſpiring our ruine together with the malice of our *Enemies*, how can we hope either, wholly

wholly to eſcape, or much longer to defer it? for if ever that deſtruction come upon us which hath been ſo long deſigning and is now hanging over us, this *Epitaph* will very well fit our *Tombs*, *Here lies a miſerable Nation, whoſe Ruine is owing more to their own Sins than to all the Deſigns and Powers of their Enemies.* Conſider this therefore, O you *Sinners* in this our *Sion*; you are, tho you know it not, in a ſtrict confederacy with the *Prieſts* and *Jeſuits* againſt your native *Country*, againſt the *Proteſtant Religion*, and againſt the *Liberties* and *Properties* of *Engliſh Men*; you are acceſſary to all thoſe *Treaſons* which they have contrived, and are ſtill contriving againſt the *Religion* and *Laws* and *Government* of the *Nation*; and if ever they thrive and take effect (which the *God* of *Heaven* avert) we may thank *you* for proſpering and ſucceeding them; who by your *pride* and *ſenſuality*, your *fraud* and *faction*, your *covetouſneſs* and *oppreſſion* do what in you lyes to ripen and give a proſperous birth to the *treaſonous* deſigns of our common *Adverſaries*. And therefore if yet you have any regard either for this ſinking *Kingdom* whoſe *Womb* bore you, or to this bleeding *Church* whoſe *Paps* gave you ſuck (both which in the moſt ſorrowful poſtures that a *Church* and *Kingdom* can be well reduced to, are now crying out unto you, *O*

you our cruel and unnatural Children, have pity upon us! have pity upon us!) if, I ſay, you have any regard either for the one or the other, O be now at laſt perſwaded to commiſerate their deplorable Condition, to take off thoſe *loud-mouthed Sins* you have ſet upon them, and are now like a *Pack* of *Hounds* tearing and worrying them in pieces.

2. From hence I infer what is the true Cauſe of thoſe many *national* Evils which we feel and juſtly fear. For ſince Iniquity doth ſo directly tend to the Ruine of a *Nation*, to what other Cauſe may we more truly attribute either thoſe preſent or thoſe future Evils that have, or ſhall befal us? When any *Calamity* befals us we are apt to aſcribe it all, either to *falſe* or elſe to *partial* Cauſes, and if we reckon *Sin* among the Cauſes, to be ſure we skip and overlook our own. 'Tis the *Careleſneſs* or *ill Deſign* of this or t'other Miniſter of State crys *one*; 'tis the *Peeviſhneſs* and *Faction* of ſuch a *Gang* and Party, crys *another*; 'tis the *Rigour* and *Severity* of thoſe who comply with and contend for the *legal Eſtabliſhment*, crys a *third*; when theſe at moſt are but a *partial* Cauſe, and the main Spring, God knows, of all our Miſchiefs lyes within our own *boſome*. And tho' many of us are ſenſible, as we cannot well be otherwiſe, that Sin hath a great hand in all our *Sufferings* and *Calamities*, yet alas how few

few are there that reckon their own Sins into the tale: They are the ſins of the *Court* crys the City, and the ſins of the City crys the *Country*; they are the ſins of the *Church* crys the *Separatiſt*, and the ſins of the *Clergy* crys the *Laity*, and the ſins of the *Gentry* crys the *Commonalty*. Thus every one waſhes his own hands, and like the *Whore* in the *Proverbs, wipes his mouth, and crys I have done no wickedneſs*; ſo that tho' none are guiltleſs and every one ſtands accuſed by his *Antagoniſt*, yet if all may be believed, none are guilty: and ſo the *Judgments* of *God* are poſted from *Tithing* to *Tithing*, from one Party of Men to another, and no body will own them tho' they call us all *Father*; which is juſt as if a *company* of *People* in a dreadful *Conflagration* ſhould fall a contending with one another at whoſe Houſe the fire began, and in the mean time permit it quietly to burn on till it had conſumed all before it. Whereas if we would put a ſtop to the *Judgments* that begin to *flame* about our ears, we ſhould every one reflect upon our ſelves, and bring our *Buckets* of *penitential* Tears to extinguiſh that part of them which our own ſins have kindled; and if we would but do thus, if every Man would ſmite upon his own *Thigh* and cry, *Lord what have I done?* then we might hope to ſee that growing Flame put out and

quenched that now waves its *curled* Head, and threatens *univerſal* Ruine: but till once we are brought to a ſorrowful ſenſe of our own *Sins*, and of the ſhare they contribute to the *publick* Miſchiefs, we are not ſo much as in the way of Recovery. For ſince the Cauſe of the Kingdoms Sickneſs lies, *God* knows, in all our Breaſts, how is it poſſible we ſhould conſpire to remove the whole till we are every Man ſenſible of his own part? Let us therefore ſearch and examine our own hearts what we have contributed to the *publick Diſeaſe*, and every one purge out his own particular ſhare of it; and then to be ſure all will ſoon be well again, and this poor *Kingdom* that hath ſo many years been languiſhing under the Sins of its *Natives*, and is now reduced almoſt to its laſt *gaſp*, will yet recover, and once more flouriſh in perfect *health* and *vigour*.

3. From hence I infer what is the juſt *Character* of thoſe Men who by their *Principles* and *Practices* contribute to the Ruine of *Kingdoms*. For ſince Iniquity ſo directly tends to a publick Ruine, we may be ſure that thoſe *Principles* and *Practices* that naturally tend to the ſame end are *Principles* and *Practices* of Iniquity; and yet good *God!* how many ſuch are there that under the fair diſguiſes of *Chriſtian* Doctrines and godly *Zeal*, and with their demure Looks and religious

ligious Countenances do many times ſeduce and *cajole* weak and well-diſpoſed Minds into ſuch ſeditious *Gangs*, mutinous Practices and treaſonous Conſpiracies as do too often end either in their own Ruine, or their native *Countreys*. Thus in the *Church* of *Rome*, what horrid and barbarous Practices have there been occaſioned by thoſe *Antichriſtian* Doctrines of the lawfulneſs of deſtroying *Hereticks*, depoſing and murdering of Kings? How many *Kings* and *Emperors* have there been excommunicated, butchered and deſtroyed by them? How many flouriſhing *Kingdoms* have there been depopulated, waſted and imbrewed in blood by them? How many *millions* of *Men*, *Women* and *Children* have there been ſacrificed to the demands of thoſe inhumane and blood-thirſty Principles? Inſomuch that it may be juſtly queſtioned, whether for 600 Years together, theſe Pretences of *Chriſtianity* did not deſtory more Lives than *Chriſtianity* it ſelf hath ſav'd *Souls*. And would to God that theſe deſtroying Principles had been for ever confined within the Pale of that degenerate *Church!* Then might our *Reformation* have boldly challenged to it ſelf the Spirit of *Peace* and *Meekneſs*, of unbounded *Charity*, unſtained *Loyalty* and firm *Allegiance*, and without a bluſh in its face have upbraided that *Mother of Harlots* with be-

ing the only *Patroneſs* of *Treaſons*, and *Rebellions*, and *Confuſions*. But alas, thoſe that have turned the World upſide down are come hither alſo, and have ſown their miſchievous Principles in our fruitful Fields, where they have ſprung up many an ill Weed; and theſe, God knows, have grown apace. For not to touch upon the old Sores, which for our own Credit ſake and our *Religions*, O would to *God* were loſt in perpetual Oblivion; how many are there this day among us that out of a pretence of Zeal for God and Religion, make it their buſineſs to divide and tear, rend and diſtract the *Kingdom*? who by ſtarting Jealouſies and ill Surmiſes, fetching and carrying Tales and ſcandalous Reports againſt the *Government*, ſuggeſting miſcarriages of State that never were, and blackning and aggravating thoſe that are, do what in them lyes to blow up the Diſcontents of the Kingdom into an inteſtine Flame, and, whilſt the common *Enemy* is boring a Hole in the bottom of the *Ship*, do ſet the *Mariners* together by the ears, that ſo while they are ſcuffling within they may neglect the danger from without, till one common Ruine involves them all, and ſinks them together with their Swords in one anothers Bowels. And tho' it is notorious to all the World what a mighty *Bulwark* this *Church* hath

hath always been to the *Reformed Religion*, how much it hath been the Dread and Envy of *Rome*, and the Mark of her Power and Malice; how all her *Agents* have conſtantly conſpired to fight neither againſt ſmall nor great, but againſt the *Church* of *England*, in hope that if once this *Maſter-fort* were diſmantled, they ſhould quickly force the leſſer *Gariſons* and *Citadels* to ſurrender; yet how many Parties have we among our ſelves, who yet pretend great Zeal to the *Reformation*, that induſtriouſly ſet themſelves to batter down its Sanctuary about its ears; that join their Throats in one common Cry with the *Prieſts* and *Jeſuits*, *Down with her, down with her even to the ground*; and all this to gratify their prejudice againg a few innocent and indifferent *Rites*, which as private *Communicants* they are very little, if at all, concerned in. I do not charge theſe Men with a *Popiſh* Deſign, tho' I am ſure they charge us with it upon far leſs Reaſon; but this I ſay and will maintain it, that whilſt they thus induſtriouſly ſet themſelves to tear open the Wounds of our *Church*, and widen them into incurable *Schiſms*, they take a moſt effectual courſe to open a gap for *Popery*, which ſtands at the door and only waits till the Breach is wide enough for it to enter.

To conclude all therefore, ſeeing it is the Sin and Wickedneſs of *People* and *Nations* that is the main Spring of their Ruine and Deſtruction, let us, as we would eſcape that diſmal Ruine, which for ſeveral years hath hung over our *Heads*, and hath been pouring it ſelf upon the Heads of ſeveral neighbouring *Countreys* and *Nations*, betake our ſelves to a deep *Humiliation* for, and hearty *Repentance* of our *Sins*, which threaten us more than all the Powers of our moſt powerful *Enemies*. We are now ingaged in a *War* againſt a great *Prince*, who hath not only by a moſt ſalvage and barbarous *Perſecution* of his own *Subjects* proclaimed himſelf a mortal *Enemy* to our *Religion*, but alſo by his perfidious Violations of the Laws of *Nations*, his Infractions of the moſt ſacred Ties and Obligations, and his unparallel'd Cruelties towards all that have fall'n within the Reach of his Power, hath rendred himſelf the common *Enemy* of *Mankind*, and ſeems to have been raiſed up on purpoſe by *God* to be the Plague and Scourge of a wicked *World*; his Power having for ſeveral years hung over all *Chriſtendom* like a diſmal *Cloud* charged with *Thunder* and *Lightning*, and having diſcharged it ſelf upon ſeveral *Countries* and *Nations* in ſuch prodigious Showers of *Blood*, and Tempeſts of Ruine and Devaſtation, as ſcarce any *Hiſtory*

can

can paralel: againſt this miſchievous *Power* that glories in nothing but *Outrage*, and triumphs upon the Ruines of *Mankind*, we are now engaged in conjunction with almoſt all the *Chriſtian World* in a common Defence, there being no remedy left us but either to repel and vanquiſh it or to lie at its feet, and tamely ſubmit our ſelves to be trampled into Deſtruction by it: nor is there any *Nation* under the Cope of *Heaven* that hath greater advantages of curbing it in its Career than our own, if our own *Sins* and *inteſtine* Diviſions do not ſpoil all. Wherefore as we hope to ſucceed in this our neceſſary Defence of our *Religion* and our native *Country*, let us every one in our places indeavour by laying aſide all our *Malice* and *Revenge*, our *Pride* and *Faction*, to cement thoſe unhappy Breaches that are among our ſelves, and all betake our ſelves to a ſerious and hearty *Repentance* for our own Sins, that thereby we may reconcile our ſelves to *God* and engage his *Almighty* Power to fight for us.

And thus I have done with the firſt Propoſition contain'd in theſe Words, [*Repent and turn your ſelves from all your Tranſgreſſions, ſo Iniquity ſhall not be your ruine*] That the Iniquity of any *People* or *Nation* tends directly to their *Ruine*. And ſhall now proceed to the ſecond; *viz.*

That

That true *Repentance* and *Amendment* is the moſt effectual way to *prevent* that *Ruine* which our Iniquities do ſo naturally bring upon us.

This it is upon a *twofold* Influence it hath,

1. Upon *God.*
2. Upon our Selves.

1. It hath a powerful Influence upon *God,* who is the *Soveraign Arbitrator* of the Fate of *Nations,* and doth diſpoſe of their *Ruine* and *Happineſs* as he pleaſes. For he being the *ſoveraign* Lord of the World, and ſupream Moderator of all Iſſues and Events, there is no particular *Kingdom* or *Nation* that is exempt from his *Juriſdiction* and *Diſpoſal,* and 'tis in his Power alone to determine of every one of them whether they ſhall be happy or miſerable. *It is the Lord that killeth and that maketh alive; that bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up; the Lord that maketh poor and maketh rich, that bringeth low and lifteth up,* 1 Sam. ii. 6, 7. And as he thus diſpoſes of the Fate of particular *Perſons,* ſo he doth much more of the Fate of particular *Nations:* for 'tis *he that encreaſeth the Nations, and deſtroyeth them; he that enlargeth the Nations, and ſtreightneth them,* Job xii. 23. And *Dan.* iv. 17. it is ſaid, that *the moſt High ruleth in the Kingdom of men,*

and

and giveth it to whomſoever he will. And in 2 *Kings* xix. 15. *Hezekiah* thus addreſſes to him, *Thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the Kingdoms of the earth.* And if the Government and Diſpoſal of *Nations* be in *Gods* hand as you ſee it is, then whatſoever hath an Influence upon *God*, to oblige and indear him to a *Nation*, muſt needs effectually conduce to its *Recovery* and *Welfare*; becauſe it makes Him its Friend, who alone can make it *happy* and *miſerable*: and that which *indears God* to us, who alone hath Power to reſcue and recover us, muſt needs *effectually* conduce to our *Recovery*. Now that *Repentance* hath ſuch an *Influence* upon *God*, will evidently appear, whether we conſider it,

1. As an Act of natural *Juſtice* and *Rectitude*; or,
2. As the *primary* End and Deſign of *Puniſhment*; or,
3. As the beſt *Reparation* we can make him for our *Rebellions* againſt him; or,
4. As the *Condition* upon which he hath *voluntarily* obliged himſelf to be reconciled unto us.

1. Conſider it as an Act of natural *Juſtice* and *Rectitude*; and as ſuch it muſt needs have a powerful *Influence* upon *God*: for *Juſtice*

Juſtice or *Rectitude* of Choice and Action are everlaſtingly founded in the *Nature* of *God*, to whom it is as natural to govern himſelf and all his Actions by the *beſt* and *pureſt Reaſon*, as it is to exiſt or live. So that whatſoever hath natural *Rectitude* in it, and is ſquared and regulated by right *Reaſon*, muſt needs be *harmonious* to the *Nature* of *God*, and conſequently doth as naturally pleaſe and gratify Him as a muſical Note doth a muſical Ear: for every *Nature* hath a delightful *Guſt* and *Reliſh* of that which is agreeable to it ſelf; and therefore ſince it is natural to *God* himſelf to act according to the *eternal Reaſons* of things, to ſee others act ſo too, muſt needs be *grateful* to his *Nature*; but to *repent* is the moſt *reaſonable* Action that ſinful Creatures can perform. For if it be beſt and moſt reaſonable *not* to do *amiſs* at all, then doubtleſs when we *have* done *amiſs*, the next moſt reaſonable is to reſolve to do ſo *no more*, there being the *ſame* Reaſon why he that hath ſinned ſhould ſin *no more*, as why he that hath not, ſhould not ſin at all. And therefore I cannot but wonder at the wild *Aſſertion* of ſome of our *Philoſophical Sinners*, that to *repent* is an Argument of *Meanneſs* of *Spirit*; and diſcovers in us a weak and *irreſolute Mind*; as if, becauſe I have plaid the *Fool*, I muſt reſolve to be a *Fool for ever*, for fear of being

being accounted *weak* and *irreſolute*; as if to *change* a *mean* and *baſe Reſolution* were a piece of Meanneſs and Baſeneſs. Indeed to *enter* into *baſe* Reſolutions argues a *baſe* or *inconſiderate* Spirit, but to *revoke* them is ſo far from being *baſe* or *mean*, that it is highly *rational* and *generous*; there being the *ſame* Reaſon for the *revoking* a bad Reſolution as there is againſt the *making* it; and next to *not yielding* to an unreaſonable Motion, the higheſt Bravery in a reaſonable Nature is *not* to *perſiſt* in it. For if we are *reaſonable* Beings, our Strength and Bravery muſt conſiſt in being *conſtant* to our *Reaſon*; but to be conſtant *againſt* it, is to be conſtant *Fools*, or conſtant *Knaves*, or both; and if this be the *Character* of a bravely *reſolute* Mind, much good may it do thoſe *heroick* Sinners that count it a Reproach to *repent*. For the main of *Repentance* conſiſts in the changing of unreaſonable for wiſe and reaſonable *Reſolutions*, than which no Change can be more agreeable to the *eternal* Laws of *Reaſon*; and theſe Laws being founded in the *Nature* of *God*, this Change muſt be infinitely agreeable to him, and have a moſt powerful Influence upon him. For ſince to *repent* is the moſt reaſonable Action that a *Sinner* can do, by what can we ſinful *Creatures* more effectually indear our ſelves to God;

God; who being moſt reaſonable himſelf, muſt needs be moſt affected with that which is moſt reaſonable in us.

2. Conſider *Repentance* as the primary End and Deſign of *Puniſhment*, and as ſuch it muſt needs have a powerful *Influence* upon God. For there being no ſuch thing as a *blind unreaſonable Vengeance* in the *Nature* of God, he cannot be ſuppoſed to puniſh for *Puniſhment* ſake, ſince *that* would be to inflict Miſery on others meerly to ſport and recreate his own *Revenge*, that being the only Paſſion in Nature which a pure Miſchief can *gratify* or *pleaſe*. Since therefore there is no *ſuch* Affection in the *Nature* of *God*, we may be ſure he doth not puniſh to *pleaſe* Himſelf, but to *reform* and *amend* his criminal Creatures, and that it is for the *Good* that Puniſhment doth *us*, and not for any Good that it doth *Him* that he chooſes and inflicts it upon us: for he needs not our Miſery to make him happy, being moſt compleatly happy already in the *immenſe* Perfection of his own Nature; and it is nothing but the Want of *Happineſs* in it ſelf that makes any *Being* deſire or deſign *anothers* Miſery. Since therefore *God* cannot be ſuppos'd to deſign our *Puniſhment* under the Notion of a *pure* Miſery, it hence neceſſarily follows, that if he deſigns any thing, as to be ſure he doth, it muſt be to do

do us or others *Good* by it, and conſequently, that ſince it is for the ſake of this *Good* that he inflicts it, he will moſt readily diſpence with it, if *that* be but anſwered and obtained without it. But now our *Repentance* doth in a great meaſure anſwer and ſupply the End of our *Puniſhment*, which is either to *reform* us when we have done amiſs, or to *warn* others by our Example not to tread in our Footſteps; both which Ends are in an high degree obtained in our unfeigned *Repentance*. For if we heartily *repent* of our paſt Iniquities, we ſhall be ſure to *amend* them for the future; and it is impoſſible *that* Repentance ſhould be true, which doth not upon the firſt Opportunity commence into an actual *Reformation*: and ſo if it be true alſo, it will render us exemplary *Warnings* unto others; for it will inflict upon us ſuch bitter *Sorrows*, ſuch deep *Remorſes* and ſtinging *Reflections* as will render us almoſt as great and eminent *Examples* of the Evil and Folly of our Sins, as the *Puniſhments* that were intended againſt them: and thoſe of our *Brethren* in Iniquity that will take no warning by us, when they ſee the *Throbs* and *Agonies* of our *Repentance*, how it Pierces, Wounds, and Mortifies our Souls; in all probability would be as *little* affected ſhould they inſtead of that ſee the hand of God upon us, *chaſtizing* and *correcting* us

for

for our Follies. For he that heartily *repents*, makes almoſt as woful an *Experiment* of the Folly and Evil of his *Sin*, as he that hath felt the Puniſhment of it; and next to a bleeding puniſhed *Criminal*, there is no ſuch *Example* of the Madneſs of Sin as a weeping, mournful, and dejected *Penitent*. Since therefore in both theſe reſpects *Repentance* doth ſo effectually ſupply the Deſigns of our *Puniſhment*, we may be ſure the *merciful* God who doth always puniſh in order to thoſe Deſigns, will be very much influenced by it. For every *Agent* is ſatisfied, when it hath its End, and therefore ſince our *Repentance* will ſupply thoſe Ends which God deſigns in our *Puniſhment*, we may beſure it will highly pleaſe and gratify him; for in our *Repentance* he hath what he aimed at, when he deſigned to *puniſh* us, and to be ſure a *good* God will never be ſo fond of the *Miſeries* of his *Creatures* as to puniſh them to no purpoſe.

3. Conſider *Repentance* as the beſt *Reparation* we can make for our paſt Sins and Rebellions, and as ſuch alſo it muſt needs have a mighty *Influence* upon God. 'Tis true for Sinners to make a *full* Reparation to God for the Affronts and Diſhonors they have caſt upon him, is *impoſſible*; becauſe what they have *done* they can no more *undo*, than make what is *paſt* never to have *been*.

But

But yet he that *heartily repents* of his former Sins, for as much as he hates and laments them and wiſnes from his Soul that he had never done them, doth hereby morally *cancel* and *revoke* them; for this univerſal Act of *Nolition* extending to all his paſt bad *Choices*, tho' it cannot ſo undo as to cauſe them not to have been, yet it doth ſo *unwill* and *unchooſe* them, as that if they *were* not, they ſhould never *be*. 'Tis true, God being our *ſupream* Lord and Lawgiver, the only *compleat* Satisfaction we can perſonally render him is *perfect* unſinning *obedience* to his Laws, of which when we have once fail'd there is no after-Act of our own can make him a perfect *Reparation*; becauſe if our after-Act be an Act of *Obedience* (as all good and vertuous ones are) God hath the *ſame* Right to it, as he had to that wherein we failed, and 'tis impoſſible that by ſatisfying *one* Debt we ſhould make a full Repayment of *another*. But of all our after-*Reparations* there is none approaches ſo near to *Innocence* and unſinning *Obedience*, as this of unfeigned *Repentance*; for all the difference between an *innocent Perſon* and a true *Penitent* is only this, that the former never *choſe* to Sin, and the latter hath *unchoſen* all his ſinful Choices; the one *did* not Sin when it was in his power to do it, the other would not have ſinned, if it were in his power not to do it. So that tho' *Re-*

pentance is by no means equivalent to *Innocence*, yet becauſe of all the after-Acts of a *nocent* Perſon it makes the neareſt approach to it, it neceſſarily follows that it is the beſt and higheſt *Reparation* that any *ſinful Creature* can make to an *offended* God. What better *Reparation* can I make for the *Delight* and *Pleaſure* I have taken in *offending* him than to ſubmit my ſelf to the *Pains* and *Anguiſh* of a bitter and ſevere *Repentance* for it? How can I more effectually repair the many Diſhonours I have done him by my *baſe* and *impious* Actions, the ſhameleſs Affronts I have put upon him, then by laying my ſtubborn *Will* at his feet, putting on *Shame* and *Confuſion* of Face, and *abhorring* my ſelf in Duſt and Aſhes before him. This being therefore the *beſt* Satisfaction that ſuch a *ſinful* People as we are can make to our *offended* but moſt *merciful* God, we may juſtly hope, that if we render him *this*, it will have an auſpicious Influence upon him to *incline* him towards us and *avert* his juſt Diſpleaſure from us. When he ſhall ſee us proſtrate at his Feet, acknowledging with *ſorrowful* Hearts the infinite Injuries we have done him, offering him all the *poor* Amends we can make him, and *grieving* that we can offer him no more; ſuch a *moving Spectacle* cannot but kindle in him a *Relenting* towards us, and cauſe his *propitious* Bowels to reſound with *Eccho's* of *Mercy*.

4. And

4. And laſtly, conſider *Repentance* as the *Condition* upon which God hath voluntarily *engaged* himſelf to be *reconciled* unto us, and as ſuch alſo it muſt needs have a *powerful Influence* upon him. So in the Text you ſee he hath *obliged* himſelf, upon the Repentance of wicked People, to interpoſe between their Sin and Ruine, *So iniquity ſhall not be your ruine.* So alſo *Job* xxxvi. 8, 9, 10, 11. you have an excellent Account of Gods *Readineſs* to relieve a repenting People, *In their Adverſity if they be bound in fetters and holden in cords of affliction, then he ſheweth them their work and their trangreſſion wherein they have exceeded. He openeth alſo their ears to diſcipline and commandeth that they return from their iniquity. If they obey and ſerve him, they ſhall ſpend their days in proſperity and their years in pleaſure.* But this perhaps you will ſay is only a Relation of what God *uſually* doth, and not a Promiſe by which he *obliges* himſelf always to do ſo well, but it ſuppoſes ſuch a Promiſe on *Gods* part; elſe there could have been no ſure Foundation for *Elihu* to have promiſed it. But then *Iſai.* i. 16, 17, 18. you have Gods own word for it, *Waſh ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well. Come now and let us reaſon together ſaith the Lord, tho' your ſins be as Scarlet, they ſhall be*

white as ſnow, though they be red like crimſon they ſhall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye ſhall eat the good of the Land. So alſo *Hoſea.* xiv. 1, 2. 4. *O Iſrael return unto the Lord thy God for thou haſt fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words and turn to the Lord, ſay unto him take away all iniquity and receive us graciouſly, ſo will we render thee the calves of our lips.* To which in the 4th Verſe God returns this anſwer of mercy, *I will heal their backſliding, I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Iſrael, he ſhall grow as a lilly and caſt forth his roots as Lebanon.* But theſe Promiſes perhaps you will ſay, reſpect *Iſrael* only, and conſequently ought not to be extended unto other *Nations*; well then let us ſee in the laſt place what he hath ſaid to *Nations* in general *Jerem.* xviii. 7, 8, *At what time I ſhall ſpeak concerning a Nation and concerning a Kingdom to pluck up and to pull down and to deſtroy it, if that Nation againſt whom I have pronounced turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.* So that what he had promiſed before to *Iſrael* his *People* here extends to all Nations, *viz.* that upon their *Repentance* he will be favourable to them, and repent of the *Evil* he intended againſt them; which gives us as great a *Certainty* of the good Influence of our *Repentance* upon him

as

as we can have of his eternal *Truth* which is the Foundation of all Certainty. So that if to have God for our *Friend* can contribute any thing to the *ſaving* us from an impending *Ruine*, then muſt our *Repentance* which makes him our *Friend* be ſo far the Means of our *Salvation*.

2. As *Repentance* hath a great Influence upon *God* to move and incline him to *reſcue* us from Ruine, ſo it hath alſo a mighty Influence upon *us* towards the *preventing* and *obviating* our Ruine; ſo that tho' there were no ſuch thing as a *God* for it to work upon and engage in our Defence and Protection, or tho' that God ſhould wholly withdraw himſelf from Action, and abſolutely refuſe to intermeddle in our Affairs; yet would our *Repentance* it ſelf by its own *natural* and *neceſſary* Influence moſt effectually operate towards the *Prevention* of that Publick Ruine; and that theſe four ways:

1. As it will throughly *awaken* us into a due ſenſe of our *Danger*.

2. As it will *animate* and *encourage* us with the Hope of *Succeſs* upon the Uſe of due and proper Means.

3. As it will take us *off* from thoſe *miſchievous Actions* which do ſo neceſſarily contribute to our Ruine.

4. As it will put us upon ſuch a *regular* Courſe of Action as doth naturally tend

to the *Publick Good.* In all which reſpects, as I ſhall ſhew you, it would be an *effectual* Means of our Recovery.

1. True *Repentance* naturally *awakens* us into a due and ſerious Senſe of our *Danger.* For a *vicious* Life doth naturally lull men into a *Sottiſh* and *Senſeleſs* Security; it makes them *ſtupid* and *reckleſs,* and bereaves them of their *natural* Foreſight and Sagacity; for beſides that it takes off their Minds from the exerciſe of Reaſon, and infatuates them with *weak* and *phantaſtick* Prejudices it renders them ſo ſoft and indulgent to their own *luxurious* and *effeminate* Genius, that they cannot indure any *ſad* or *ſerious* thoughts ſhould intermingle with their *Jovial Airs.* So that if Danger ſtands at any *diſtance* from them, they wilfully wink at it, and are afraid to look it in the face, leſt it ſhould ſuggeſt ſuch thoughts to them as would diſturb the Scenes of their *Mirth,* and daſh their Draughts of *ſinful* Pleaſures with *Wormwood.* Hence *Amos* vi. 1. 3. it is made the *Character* of the wicked *Iſraelites* that lived at eaſe in *Zion, that they put far from them the evil day,* that is, they would not entertain a thought of the *Nearneſs* of their Danger, leſt it ſhould prove a *Thorn* in their Pillows, and *diſturb* their ſoft and beloved eaſe. So alſo *Hoſea* xi. 9. *Strangers have devoured his ſtrength,* (ſaith he

he ſpeaking of that wicked People) *and he knoweth it not, yea gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he perceiveth it not*; that is, tho' they were exceedingly *waſted* already and had all the *Symptoms* of an approaching *Ruine* upon them, yet they were ſo *intent* upon their Luſts, and ſo *beſotted* by them, that they took no notice of it. And if Men will be ſo *ſtupid* as to neglect their *Danger*, and never think of *retreating* till they have run themſelves into the *Jaws* of it, what *Remedy* is there for them? how can they *eſcape* that will ſleep on *ſecurely* upon the Brinks of a *Precipice*, and will not regard their Danger till they are dropping *headlong* into it, and are fallen beyond *Prevention* or *Recovery*? But when once Men betake themſelves to a courſe of *ſerious Repentance*, they will ſoon recover out of this their *Lethargick* temper. For Repentance will not only chaſe away all thoſe *effeminate* Luſts which barr'd their *Underſtanding* againſt all Apprehenſions of Danger, and rendred them ſo *ſupine* and *regardleſs*, but it will make them deeply *ſenſible* of the Deſert of their Sin, and what *fearful* Effects are to be expected from it; ſo that now they will be ſo far from thruſting *from* them the Thoughts of their *Danger*, that they will reckon it among the numberleſs Miracles of Gods *Goodneſs* that they were not

long ago *ſwallowed* up and *conſumed* by it: and beſides thoſe *viſible* Dangers that attend them in the *common* Courſe of Things, they will diſcern a *black* Cloud ariſing out of their own *Guilts*, and gathering into ſtorms of *Vengeance*, and look upon their *paſt* Wickedneſs as the dire *Omens* of an *approaching* Judgment; and being thus awaken'd into a *Senſe* of the Danger that threatens them, they are ſo far on their way towards an happy *Recovery*.

2. True *Repentance* will alſo animate and incourage a People with the Hope of *Succeſs* upon the uſe of *due* and *proper* Means. It is the *natural* Property of a *wicked* Life to render Men *ſecure* when Danger is at a *diſtance*, and *deſperate* when it is *near* at hand; when it is *remote* they are afraid to mind it leſt it ſhould *interrupt* their Pleaſures, and mingle *Diſcords* with their *Harmony*; but when by reaſon of their *Fear* they are *forced* to mind it, the ſudden *unexpected* Alarm it gives them raiſes ſuch an *Uproar* in their Thoughts that they can neither *find* nor *force* an Eſcape from it. For the *oppoſite* Affections of Humane Nature ſucceed one another in the *ſame* Degree. Thus when we *hate* thoſe whom we *lov'd* we uſually *hate* them in the *ſame* degree that we *lov'd* them; and when two *contrary* Paſſions follow one another, they are ge-

nerally

nerally both *extream*, and by how much the *foregoer* exceeded the juſt *medium* of one way, by ſo much will the *follower* exceed the other; juſt like the *vibrations* of a *Pendulum*, the which the farther you ſwing it *this* way, the farther it will return the *other*; and conſequently the more we exceed in *Security* whilſt Danger is purſuing us, the more we ſhall exceed in *Fear* when it hath overtaken us. So that when out of an *extravagant* Indulgence to their *ſinful* Pleaſures Men ſhut their Eyes againſt *approaching* Danger, and will not open them till it is juſt *upon* them and ſtares them in the Face, the *gaſtly* and *ſurprizing* Spectacle will preſently tranſport them out of *one* Extream into *another*, out of a deep *Security* into a dead *Diſpair*; eſpecially conſidering how naturally the Senſe of *Danger* awakens in *guilty* Minds their natural Dread of *God*, and fills them with fearful Expectations from *Him*: and when a Man awakes upon the brinks of a *Precipice* and all on a ſuddain ſees an *apparent* Deſtruction before him, and by this Sight is at the ſame time rouſed into a *diſmal* Apprehenſion of an *Almighty Vengeance* behind him ſtretching forth its arm to thruſt him head-long down, how muſt it needs *appale* and *aſtoniſh* him, and *diſarm* him of all Hope and Power of eſcaping. So that out of a *ſecure Impenitence*, you

you ſee, there is but one remove into an *heartleſs* Deſperation: and when Men are *deſperate* in the midſt of Danger, and are reduced to their wits end; when they have neither *Prudence* to forecaſt, nor *Courage* to execute any method of Recovery, without a Miracle their *Ruine* is unavoidable. Of this you have an eminent Example in the wicked *Iſraelites*, who when their Danger was *afar off* were moſt unreaſonably *ſecure* and *regardleſs* of it, but when *Senacheribs* Army had *inveſted* their *City*, and they ſaw themſelves *ſurrounded* with Ruine on every ſide, then their *Security* immedately converts into the moſt *frightful* and *horrid* Apprehenſions; for ſo the Prophet deſcribes it *Iſaiah* xxxiii. 14. *The ſinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulneſs hath ſurprized the hypocrites: who amongſt us ſhall dwell with the devouring fire? who amongſt us ſhall dwell with everlaſting burnings?* Whilſt the Power of that haughty Monarch was at a *diſtance* from them, they *laughed* at and *deſpiſed* it; but now it is at their *doors* they are ſo *frightned* at it, that they had no ſofter Words to expreſs it by than *devouring fire* and *everlaſting burnings:* So that if God had not reſcued them by a *Miracle*, their unmanly *Fears* had ſo diſarmed them, that they would have never been able to defend themſelves. But now by our *Repentance* we do moſt certainly prevent being

ing reduced to this *woful* Extremity; for *that* will open our Eyes to all approaching *Dangers*, and remove thoſe effeminate *Luſts* out of our way which interrupted our *Proſpect* of them; ſo that we ſhall ſee them afar off, and having a free *Sight* and *Expectance* of them, ſhall not be *ſurpriz'd* by them when they draw *nearer*, and are ready to faſten upon us; by which means we ſhall have *Time* to arm and fortify our ſelves againſt them, and to prepare to receive them with *Courage* and *Conduct*. And when they are come, our *Repentance* will alſo animate us with the Hopes of a timely *Relief* and *Succour* from above, and encourage us to hold out to the laſt Extremity in *Expectance* of God's appearing in the *Mount*, and a timely *Interpoſure* between us and Ruine. For this being the *Condition* upon which God hath promiſed us his *Favour* and *Friendſhip*, there is no Reaſon why we ſhould be *deſperate*, ſo long as we live in the *Performance* of it. So that the Senſe of our unfeigned *Repentance* will inſpire us with *joyful* Hope that God is for us; and what Danger can *diſhearten* us under this glorious Hope that *infinite* Wiſdom and Power is on our ſide?

3. True *Repentance* doth alſo aboliſh thoſe *miſchievous Actions* which do naturally contribute to the Ruine of a People. How much a *wicked* Courſe of Life tends to a Nations *Ruine*,

Ruine, is *notorious* enough to any Man that hath been an Obſerver of the *Effects* and *Conſequences* of humane Actions; how it *infatuates* their *Counſels*, *weakens* their *Courage*, *rends* their *Unity* and *Concord*; how it *diſorders* them in all their *natural* Reſpects and Dependencies, *conſumes* their *Wealth*, and *proſtitutes* their *Reputation*; and how by all theſe *miſchievous* Effects it gradually *waſtes* and *conſumes* them, and lays the Foundation of their inevitable *Ruine*. So that whilſt *Vice* and *Wickedneſs* prevail in a Nation, 'tis like a lingering *Conſumption* in our Bodies that ſooths us into an Opinion that we are *well* and in *Health*, or flatters us with fair Hopes of *Recovery*; but in the mean time is *undermining* the Fort of our *Life*, and *preying* upon our *Vitals*. But it is the moſt *wretched* piece of *Deceit* in the World for a Nation to think it ſelf *well* while it is *wicked*; for ſo many *Vices* as it hath growing in it, ſo many *Diſeaſes* it hath ingendring in its Bowels, which tho' it may ſtruggle with a *while* by the natural Strength and Vigour of its Conſtitution, will by *degrees* inevitably weaken it, and without a *ſpeedy* and *effectual* Purgation finally *conſume* and *deſtroy* it; and if it were the *beſt conſtituted* Nation in the World, it would be impoſſible for it not to *decay* and *languiſh* under the *malignant Influence* of an *Epidemical Wickedneſs*. That therefore

fore which purges away this *corrupt* Humor out of which all *National* Diſeaſes ſpring, muſt needs be the moſt *effectual* Means of a *dying Nations* Recovery, and that, and that only, is *Repentance*, one *eſſential* Part whereof conſiſts in putting off the Body of *Sin*, ceaſing to do *Evil* and denying all *Ungodlineſs* and *Worldly Luſts*. And if once this bad *Cauſe* were removed, all the miſchievous *Effects* of it would immediately ceaſe, and thereupon the *ſick* and *declining* Kingdom that groans and languiſhes under them would immediately *mend*, and in a little time *recover* its native Health and Vigour. For what ſhould hinder it from growing *well*, when the malignant *Cauſe* of all its Diſtempers is removed? when that which *befools* its *Counſels*, *Diſſolves*, its *Courage diſorder* its *Harmony*, *breaks* its *Unity*, *laviſhes* out its *Wealth* and *Reputation* is utterly aboliſh'd; what ſhould hinder it from growing up again into a *wiſe* and a *valiant*, an *orderly* and *unanimous*, a *wealthy* and *renowned* Nation?

4. And laſtly, true *Repentance* doth alſo put us upon ſuch a *Courſe* of Action as doth naturally tend to the *Publick Good*. For *Repentance* doth not only conſiſt in *ceaſing* to do Evil, but in *learning* to do Well, in putting *on* the *new* Man as well as putting *off* the *old*, that is, it is an *intire Submiſſion* of

of our ſouls to God, to *do* what he *commands*, as well as to *forbear* what he *forbids*, and the *Matter* of his Commands is ſuch as all of it tends to the *publick Good*: and if the ſeveral *Ranks* and *Orders* of Men whereof a *Nation* is compoſed would but *unanimouſly* conſpire in that Courſe of Action which God hath enjoyned, it would doubtleſs more contribute to the *Weal* and *Proſperity* of ſuch a Nation, than the *wiſeſt Counſels* or moſt *puiſſant* Forces without it. If thoſe that ſit at the *Helm* would but once reſolve to ſtear by thoſe excellent Rules of honeſt *Prudence*, impartial *Juſtice*, diſcreet *Mercy*, wiſe *Liberality*, adviſed *Conſtancy* and *Magnanimity*, it would doubtleſs render their *Government* far more *ſafe* and *eaſy*, more *uſeful*, and *proſperous*, than all the crafty *Tricks*, dark *Intreagues*, and wiley *Subterfuges* of wicked *Policy*, which inſtead of *promoting* the *Government* do generally lead it into a perplexed Maze, and leave it there miſerably *bewildred* and *intangled*. Again, if thoſe that are *Subjects* would but learn to govern themſelves by thoſe Laws of *Candor* and *Modeſty*, of *Meekneſs* and *Fidelity*, of *Submiſſion* and *Loyalty*, which God hath enjoyned them; with what Peace and Quiet, Safety and Contentment might they enjoy themſelves under the Shadow of *Government*. In a word, if the *Rich* would be

but

but as *courteous* and *charitable*, the *Poor* as *thankful* and *induſtrious*, and all as *juſt* and *honeſt*, as *kind*, and *gentle*, as ready to *aſſiſt*, *forbear* and *forgive* one another as God *requires*, what a moſt *glorious* and *happy* Society would there ſpring out of ſuch a *regular* Courſe of Action? doubtleſs for *Peace* and *Contentment*, for *Bliſs* and *Happineſs*, next to *Heaven* it ſelf, there is no Place comparable to a *vertuous Nation*, and were I in queſt of a *terreſtrial* Paradiſe, I ſhould ſooner expect it in a barren *Wilderneſs* inhabited with a *vertuous* People, than in the moſt fruitful and delicious *Canaan* peopled with *wicked* and *degenerous* Natives. Since therefore a *virtuous* Courſe of Action hath ſo *direct* a Tendency to the *publick Good*, it hence neceſſarily follows that *Repentance*, which is the Entrance and Introduction to it, muſt needs very much contribute to the *Safety* and *Recovery* of a *Nation*; becauſe it puts the ſeveral parts of it into *ſuch* a Courſe of Life and Converſation as mutually conduces to the *Peace* and *Happineſs* and *Preſervation* of the Whole: ſo that whether we conſider the powerful *Influence* it hath upon *God*, or the good *Effect* it hath upon *us*, you ſee 'tis a moſt *efficacious* Inſtrument of *publick Happineſs* and *Salvation*. Wherefore if the Conſideration of our own *private* Intereſt, and everlaſting fate in *another* World be not ſufficient

ficient to move us to a ſerious *Repentance*, let us add to this the Conſideration of our *temporal* Concerns, which are all involved in the fate of the *Nation*. For the *publick Good* is a common *Bank* in which every *Member* hath a ſhare, and conſequently whatſoever Damage *that* ſuffers, we muſt expect to bear *our* Part of it. And yet, God help us! if we impartially view the Deſigns and Behaviour of the *Generality*, we would hardly think that they did ſeriouſly believe there were any ſuch thing as a *Common Weal* among us, every one almoſt endeavouring to advance his *own Intereſt* though it be upon the *publick Ruine*, and all our Pretences to the *Publick* being little elſe but a contraſting of *Parties* running a Tilt at one another, whilſt the *Common Good* lyes between them, and is equally trampled on by *both* ſides. Wherefore as we would not betray our *Common Intereſt*, and bury our ſelves in the *publick Ruine*, let us be perſuaded to conſider our ways before it be too late, and turn to the *Lord* by a deep and hearty *Repentance*. And to move you hereunto I ſhall deſire you to conſider theſe few things.

1. What imminent Danger we are in.

2. How much we have *all* contributed to it.

3. How poſſible it is to *prevent* it by our timely *Repentance*.

4. How

4. How much our *perſonal Repentance* will avail us tho' we ſhould not *prevent* it.

5. How dearly we ſhall *repent* when it is too late, if we do not endeavour the Prevention of it by repenting *now*.

1. Conſider the imminent *Danger* we are in. For if we conſider our *preſent* Circumſtances, how many *viſible* Cauſes there are conſpiring to effect our *Ruine*, how we lye open to the *common* Adverſary that doth ſo vigorouſly purſue our Deſtruction, and like an unwalled *Vineyard*, are ſurrounded with *wild Boars* without, and over-run with *little Foxes* within, which, tho' they are of different Kinds, agree in the ſame Ends, and concur to waſte and to deſtroy; how whilſt theſe *little Foxes* are pulling down the *Vine* above, the *wild Boars* are waiting underneath to ſeize and to devour both; how the reſtleſs and indefatigable Malice of our *Romiſh Adverſaries* without is aſſiſted with the furious Zeal of our hair-brain'd *Factions* within, who tho' they cannot be inſenſible how much their Diviſions *weaken* and *expoſe* us, yet ſeem reſolved rather to venture all than not to be *uppermoſt*; how our Counſels *puzzl'd* and *entangled*, and our Procedures *clogg'd* and *incumbred*; how our Choices are *poiz'd* and *ſuſpended* between *contrary* Evils that ſeem ſo *equally* great, that we can hardly determine which is the *leaſt*; in a

word, how our Miſchiefs are *chain'd* and *link'd* to one another, ſo that we cannot remove *one* without drawing on *another* in the room of it, and the ſuſpicion of *future* makes us afraid to provide againſt *preſent* Miſchiefs: if, I ſay, we conſider all theſe things, we cannot but be ſenſible how *great* and *near* our Danger is, and how earneſtly it calls upon us for a *ſpeedy* and *effectual* Remedy. And when we are *encompaſt* with ſo many Dangers on every ſide, it is not prodigious *Sottiſhneſs* for us to ſtand gazing on them with our Hands in our Boſoms, making Speeches about them, and telling frightful Stories of them to one another, whilſt like a ſpreading *Gangreen* they are growing upon us, and creeping inſenſibly to our *Hearts*, whilſt the proper Remedy of them is in our *own* hands, and by a *timely* Application we may quickly *cure* and *prevent* them? When we ſee our ſelves upon the *Borders* of Ruine, is it a time to ſtand chattering at the *Wind*, ſpending our Breath in *fruitleſs* Complaints, *impotent* Invectives, and *factious* Murmurings? When if, inſtead of finding fault with our *Superiors*, arraigning the *Government*, and quarrelling at the *publick* Management and Conduct, we would at leaſt reſolve to find Fault with *our ſelves*, arraign our *own Vices* at the Bar of an *impartial* Conſcience, and make a through *Inquiſition* into the ill

Conduct

Conduct of *our own* Lives and Manners, we might *cure* the Evils and *prevent* the Dangers which we talk and complain of to no purpose? Certainly if ever Dangers call'd for a ſpeedy *Repentance*, ours do; but if we will be deaf to their Cries we deſperately abandon our ſelves to the diſmal and pitileſs Deſert of *our own* Folly and Madneſs!

2. Conſider how much we have *all* contributed to the Dangers that are preſſing upon us. I doubt if we *impartially* ſurvey our *ſelves* and take a ſevere Account of our *own* Doings, there be very *few*, if *any*, that will be able to *acquit* themſelves of having ſome hand in thoſe publick *Miſchiefs* that hang over us; that in *all* Particulars have behaved themſelves ſo ſoberly and circumſpectly as to contribute *nothing* towards the filling up the Kingdoms Iniquities. Tho' *many* of us indeed have not been carried away with the impetuous Current of open *Profaneneſs* and *Debauchery*, yet perhaps we have ſuffered our ſelves to be born down with the contrary Stream of *Faction*, *Schiſm*, or demure *Hypocriſy*; by which we have not only *ſcandaliz'd* our Religion, and *weaken'd* the Intereſt of it, *imbroiled* our *Government*, and *diſturbed* the methods of our *Happineſs*; but alſo highly *incens'd* againſt us the God of *Peace* and *Truth*, and *Order*. And tho'

others of us have neither been *profane* nor *factious*, yet it may be we have been *remiſs* and *lukewarm* in *Religion*, or extreamly *unfruitful* under thoſe rich *Manurings* and growing *Showers* which it continually affords us; by which we have mightily *provok'd* our God to remove our *Candleſtick*, and leave us in the *dark*; to cut us down like *fruitleſs* Trees that are good for nothing, but only to burthen and cumber the ground: and if one way or 'tother we have contributed to thoſe publick *Calamities* that threaten us, we have no other way to repair the *Injury* we have done our *Country*, but by our timely and ſerious *Repentance:* this is the only *Balſam* by which we can hope to *heal* thoſe Wounds we have given her; and if when we have wounded we refuſe to *cure* her, 'tho the Means are in our *own* hands, we are doubly *guilty* of her Blood, and ſhall be doubly *charg'd* with it whenever an *Inquiſition* is made for it. So that *Repentance* is a Debt we owe the Nation for the Miſchiefs which our *Sins* have done to it, and which we can no otherwiſe repair but by *repenting* of thoſe Sins before it is too late, leſt we leave ſuch a Reckoning behind us as will *ruine* the Kingdom, and *undo* ſucceeding Generations to diſcharge it.

3. Conſider how poſſible it is *yet* to prevent our Danger by a timely *Repentance*. Tho'

Tho' our Condition be full of *Hazard*, yet, God be praiſed, it is not altogether *deſperate*; tho' we are *inter pontem & fontem* deſcending between the Bridge and River, yet there are a thouſand Accidents may *intervene*, and *catch* us in our Fall and ſet us *ſafe* a ſhore again; and that *Almighty Providence* which orders and diſpoſes the *Iſſues* and *Events* of Things, hath infinite ways, which we foreſee not, to change the *confuſed* Scene of our Affairs, and reduce our *Chaos* into *Order*. And how *willing* and *ready* he is to do it, is viſible enough by his *Long-ſuffering* towards us, and his *patient* Endurance of our Provocations, in expectation that at length his *Goodneſs* may lead us to *Repentance*. How *careful* and *induſtrious* hath he been to *diſcover* our Danger to us? to draw the *Curtain* from before the dark Deſigns of our *Enemies*, and to *unmask* their intended Miſchiefs in deſpite of all their Arts of Concealment? And conſidering thro' how many *Difficulties* the Providence of God hath preſſed in carrying on the happy *Diſcovery*, how ſtrangely he hath *forced* it on, and ſcattered the Clouds before it, we have abundant Reaſon to acknowledge his *Readineſs* to ſuccour and relieve us, to prevent our being ſurprized with an unexpected Ruine, and ſwallowed up by it before we were *aware*. For what ſhould his Aim be in

ſhewing us our Danger, but only to awake us to *Repentance*, that ſo by that *powerful* Motive he might be induced to *reſcue* and *deliver* us; Why ſhould he *warn* us ſo long before hand of the Blow that is falling upon us, but only to give us Space and Opportunity to *prevent* it by our timely *Repentance*? So that ever ſince the *Diſcovery* of our Danger, *Deliverance* hath been *waiting* upon us, expecting that happy moment when *we* would open the door of our *Repentance* to it, and invite it in, and make it welcome. But hitherto, alas! we have ſhut the door againſt it, and made it *wait* in vain: for ſeveral Months the willing *Child* hath been ſtrugling for Birth in the Womb of *Providence*, and yet it is unborn; and ſtill it ſtruggles, but all in vain, for want of our *Repentance* to open the *Womb* to it, and promote its *travail* to a happy Birth. And do we yet ſtand ſtill as Perſons *unconcern'd*, when *ours*, our *Country's*, and our *Childrens* Fate depends upon the Iſſue of it? When we may *yet* be ſafe, if by *abandoning* our Wickedneſs we will but *aſſiſt* to our Deliverance, ſhall we ſtand looking on with our Hands in our Boſoms, and ſee it ſtifled in the *Womb*?

4. Conſider how much our *perſonal Repentance* will avail us tho' we ſhould *not* prevent our preſent Danger by it. For I know

know it will be objected, To what purpoſe ſhould *we* repent, if *others* ſtill go on in their *Wickedneſs*? Can it be hoped that *our perſonal* Amendment ſhould have ſuch a mighty *Influence* as to diſperſe that mighty *Cloud* of *Judgments* that hangs over the whole *Nation*? To which, in the firſt place, I anſwer, that perhaps it *may*. It may be there is not *yet* a ſufficient Number of *righteous Perſons* among us to move the holy God to be propitious to this *ſinful* Nation; and if for the ſake of *five* righteous *Perſons* God would have ſaved a *Sodom*, why may not you hope that by adding your *ſelves* to the far greater number of *righteous Perſons* among *us*, you may yet prevail with God to ſave the whole *Nation*; and for the *poſſible* Hope of being *Saviours* to our native *Country*, who would not make ſuch a *cheap* and *eaſie* Experiment? But ſuppoſe it ſhould *not* produce this *happy* Effect, that notwithſtanding our *perſonal Repentance* the Cloud ſhould break, and diſcharge a bloody Storm upon the *Kingdom*; yet I dare ſecure you, you ſhall never have Cauſe to *repent* of your *Repentance*; for God will either call *you* into his *Chambers*, ſhut his door upon you, and hide you for a little moment till the Indignation is *overpaſt*, or he will *turn* it into ſuch an ineſtimable *Bleſſing* that you ſhall be ſure to reap from it un-

ſpeakably more *Good* than *Prejudice*; and whilſt *impenitent Wretches* ſhall be laſhed at the ſame time both by *God* and their own *Conſciences*, whilſt *they* ſhall be ſurrounded with *Darkneſs* and *Horror* on every ſide, and not be able to diſcover any *glimps* of *day* either within, or without, or above them; whilſt *Heaven* and *Earth*, and their own *Conſciences* are ſtorming together about their Ears, ſo that which way ſoever they turn themſelves, they are *miſerable*; whilſt *God* diſowns them, their own *Conſciences* reproach them, and the *World* will no longer help or ſuccour them; *you*, being reconciled by your *Repentance* both to your *God* and your *Conſcience*, will have a *ſafe* Retreat within your *own* Boſoms, whereinto you may retire, and be merry in ſpight of Fortune; and being *there* entertained with the raviſhing ſenſe of your *Fathers* Love, with the ſoft *Harmonies* of a quiet *Conſcience*, and the glorious *Hopes* of a bleſſed *Immortality* hereafter, you will not only be inabled to *ſupport* your ſhare of the *publick Calamity*, but alſo to *rejoyce* and *triumph* under it. So that would you be but perſuaded to *repent*, I durſt aſſure you, you ſhall find the Benefit of it either in the Removal of the *Judgments* you fear, or in the Aſſiſtance it would give you to *undergo* them bravely.

5. And

5. And laſtly, Conſider how *dearly* we ſhall repent when it is *too late*; if we do not endeavour to *prevent* our Danger by repenting *now* when we are groveling under thoſe dreadful *Judgments* that hang lowering over us. When our *Religion*, *Liberties* and *Properties* are ſeized, and become a prey to our inſulting *Enemies*; when our *Country* is ſpoiled or imbrewed in Blood by *inteſtine* Broils or *Forein* Invaſions, and all is involved in *Ruines* and *Confuſions* round about us; *then* we ſhall remember with the Tears in our Eyes that we *had once* an Opportunity to be *happy*; that if we would have been contended to part with a few *baſe* Luſts that did *unman* and *proſtitute* our Natures, we might have been ſtill a *bleſſed* and *proſperous People*; that if we would have been ſo *wiſe* as to have ſacrificed to Gods approaching *Judgments* our *Senſuality* and *Profaneneſs*, our *Faction*, *Oppreſſion* and *Hypocriſy*, they would *then* have fairly retreated and left us in the *quiet* Enjoyment of all our *ſpiritual* and *temporal* Bleſſings we enjoy'd; whereas *now* being incenſed and drawn on by our *deſperate* Obſtinacy, they have made a *diſmal* Spoil of all, and left us nothing but our *Sins* and *Guilts* to bear us company in our Miſeries. When we ſhall ſee our deſolate *Country* that was heretofore the *Queen of Nations* ſitting like a mournful

Widow

Widow in the duſt, with her Head *uncrowned*, her Garments *torn*, her Breaſt *wounded*, and all her Parts beſmeared with *Blood*; when we ſhall ſee our *Church* unpaled and all her fences trodden down by wild *Beaſts*; her *Beauty* defaced, her Sun extinguiſhed, or overcaſt with *Darkneſs* and *Confuſion*; how will it *cut* our Hearts to think that all this is the Product of *our own* Follies, and that if we would have been perſuaded *betime* to abandon our Luſts and liſten to *ſober* Counſels, all theſe *diſmal* Ruines and Deſolations might have eaſily been *prevented*. O *then* we ſhall lament our Follies and wring our woful hands, and wiſh a thouſand and a thouſand times that we had been wiſer before it was *too late*! Seeing therefore it is not *yet* too late, let us for once *reſolve* to make a tryal what good our *Repentance* can do to the *Publick*; and O would to God we would once *conſpire* to make this bleſſed Experiment! and if upon our making it, a *Cure* doth not yet follow, if we do not ſenſibly perceive our *Grievances* abate, our *Dangers* vaniſh, our *Enemies* weakened and diſheartned, and our broken *Counſels* retrieved and united in the *publick Good*, I will be contented to undergo *Caſſandra*'s Fate never to be *believed* in my Affirmations more. For this I am ſure of, *Repentance* cannot fail of a *good* Effect, and that beſides

ſides all the Good it would do us by its own *natural* and *neceſſary Influence*, it would *reconcile Him* to us that hath the diſpoſal of our Fate, and then all would go well, and *God even our own God would give us his bleſſing*. Which he of his infinite Mercy grant, to whom with his eternal Son and Spirit be aſcribed of us and all the World all Honour and Glory and Power from this time forth and for evermore. *Amen.*

MATTHEW

MATTHEW III. 8.

Bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance.

THeſe Words are a Part of *John Baptiſt*'s Sermon to the *Phariſees* and *Sadducees* of whom mention is made in the foregoing Verſe: the *firſt* of which being a ſort of *demure* and *formal* Hypocrites, who under *religious* Pretences ſhrouded the blackeſt Villanies; the *ſecond*, a Company of *Atheiſtical* Debauchees, who, to ſuperſede the troubleſome Obligations of their *Conſciences*, and to obtain of themſelves a free Diſpenſation to be wicked, denied the Exiſtence of *Spirits* and the *Life to come*. The *Baptiſt*, upon their Addreſs to be admitted to his *Baptiſm*, ſharply reprehends them both under one common Name, *O Generation of Vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come!* and then he goes on, *Bring forth fruits meet for Repentance*. As much as if he ſhould have ſaid, "O ye *worſt* of Men, ye brood of ve-"nomous *Miſcreants!* I perceive by your "coming hither ſome body or other hath "alarmed you with the *Forewarnings* of that "dreadful Vengeance that is falling upon "*this* Generation; and now to prevent it,

you

"you pretend *Repentance* of your Sins, "becauſe you have heard that I baptize "with *Water* unto *Repentance*, you would "needs aſſume this *outward* Badge of *Pe-* "*nitents*. But I know you well enough, "ye are a pack of arrant *Knaves* and *Hy-* "*pocrites*, and howſoever at preſent you "may be frightned into a demure Pretence "of *Repentance*, I know your Hearts are "as *wicked* as ever, and that you will not "part with *one* of thoſe *Luſts* which ren- "der you ſo *baſe* and *infamous*. And there- "fore, for my part, till I have better hopes "of you, I am reſolved I will have nothing "to do with you. Go therefore, *bring* "*forth fruits meet for Repentance*; let me ſee "by your *Actions* that you are Penitents *in-* "*deed*, and then if you come I ſhall gladly "receive you to this my ſolemn *Sacrament* of *Repentance*. This I take to be the moſt *natural* and *genuine* Senſe of the Words, and I know but one Objection of any weight againſt it, that whereas this Account makes *John Baptiſt* to have refuſed them his *Bap-* *tiſm*, other Texts of *Scripture* ſeem to aſſert, that they *themſelves* refuſed to be *baptiſed* of him, and they did not come to him under a Pretence of *Repentance*, but upon a Deſign to *cavil* with him, and *expoſe* his *Baptiſm* to the *People*: for Luke 7. 30. it is ſaid, that the *Phariſees and Lawyers rejected, the counſel*

of

of God againſt themſelves, i. e. the Counſel which God, by *John* the *Baptiſt*, gave them, *being not baptiſed of him*; but what Counſel was it that they rejected? Was it the Counſel of being *baptiſed*? No ſuch matter; for *John Baptiſt* never adviſed them to it, but the Counſel he gave them was to *repent*, and to *bring forth fruits meet for Repentance*. And this they rejected; for which they were not baptiſed of him. Not but that they would have been, if they could; for it is expreſly ſaid in the Verſe foregoing my Text, that they *came* to *John*'s Baptiſm, but *John* knowing their *Hypocriſy* would by no means admit them to it, till they had firſt brought forth ſuch *Fruits* as were *meet* and *proper* for *Repentance*. In handling of which Words, I ſhall endeavour theſe Three things:

1. To ſhew you what this *Repentance* is of which he exhorts them to bring forth the *meet Fruits*.

2. What the *meet Fruits* of this *Repentance* are.

3. The Neceſſity of bringing forth ſuch *Fruits*.

1. What this *Repentance* is of which the *Baptiſt* here exhorts them to bring forth *meet Fruits*? To which I anſwer, briefly, that by *Repentance* we are to underſtand a ſincere and thorough change of Mind, which as it hath been often obſerved, is the proper

per ſignification of μετάνοια, which is the word which the *New Teſtament* moſt commonly uſes for *Repentance*. And then the *Mind* is *chang'd*, when the prevailing *Purpoſe* and *Reſolution* of it is *altered*; when upon a due Conſideration of the Miſchief, Indecency, or Inconvenience of his *preſent Reſolution*, a Man is effectually perſuaded into a *contrary Purpoſe*. his Mind, we ſay, is *chang'd*; becauſe he hath now a *contrary Judgment* of things, which form his *Will* into a *contrary Reſolution*: and when once our Mind is thus *chang'd* as to any Deſign or Courſe of *Action* we are then ſaid to *repent* of it. So that to *repent* of our Sins, is to be effectually *chang'd* and *alter'd* in our Minds concerning them, ſo as that whereas *before* we did in our *practical Judgment* prefer them at leaſt *pro hic & nunc* before our duty, and in our Will *embrace* and reſolutely *adhere* to them, we do *now* upon cool Deliberation pronounce them to be the *worſt* of *Evils*, and as ſuch do heartily purpoſe and reſolve to *forſake* them. And in this conſiſts the *Nature* and *Eſſence* of *Repentance*, *viz.* in a *firm* Reſolution to *forſake* our Sins upon *cool* and *deliberate* Judgment. Where, by *Reſolution* I do not mean a mere *Logical Concluſion* by way of *Inference* from *Premiſes*, that ſuch or ſuch a thing is beſt and fitteſt to be done; for in this there is no *Choice*, the Proceedings of

our

our Reaſon being as neceſſary as thoſe of our *Senſe*; and where there is no *Choice*, there can be no *Virtue*. But the *Reſolution* of *Repentance* is an Act of the *Will*, *viz.* its decretory and definitive Sentence for the actual Proſecution of ſuch a Courſe as upon *calm* Deliberation is propoſed as that which is moſt *fit* and *neceſſary*. For ſuppoſe our *Reaſon* and *Senſe* as two *Parties* pleading their reſpective Cauſes and Intereſts, the one for *Vertue*, and the other for *Vice*; and ſuppoſe that in the Concluſion, either the Matter be left *in æquilibrio* between them, or that *Reaſon* hath baffled *Senſe*, and obtained a clear Conviction that the Cauſe of *Vertue* is infinitely *beſt* and moſt *preferable*, but that ſtill the *Will* is in ſuſpence, and hath not peremptorily decreed either one way or t'other; why hitherto all that hath been done is but mere *Speculation*, there is nothing of *Choice* in it, nothing of *Vertue*, nor conſequently of *Repentance*. But when upon a through hearing of both *Parties*, the *Will* interpoſes its *Soveraignty*, and pronounces Sentence on *Reaſon* and *Vertue's* ſide, this is my *final Reſolution*, and this by the Grace of God I will ſtand to, I will from henceforth *ſubmit* to my *Duty*, how difficult ſoever it be, and *diſcharge* thoſe baſe miſchievous *Luſts* of mine what Temptations ſoever may aſſault me: when, I ſay, our *Will* with good

good *Advice* and with a full *Conſent* hath pronounced this peremptory *Decree* and *Reſolution*, our *Mind* is changed and our *Repentance* actually commenc'd. Thus the *Prodigal Son*, for inſtance, while he was conſidering with himſelf the happy State he was fallen from, *How many hired Servants of my Father have bread enough and to ſpare*, and the miſerable Condition he was fallen into, *and I periſh with hunger*, was only in the *Porch* and *Entry* of *Repentance*, and had he ſtaid there and gone no farther, all this had been nothing but a dead *Speculation* notwithſtanding which he would have *periſhed* in his Sin. But when from hence he proceeded to that peremptory *Reſolution*, *I will ariſe and go to my Father*, in that very Moment he became a ſincere *Penitent*; and if in that inſtant he had been ſtruck dead before ever he had taken one ſtep towards his *Father*, he had dyed in a State of *Repentance*. For it is plain his Mind was changed, he had put off the *old man* and put on the *new*, he had formed a new *Judgment* and a new *Reſolution*; and if he had immediately died, he had died in Subjection to God, and would have aroſe and gone to his *Father*, as he did while he lived. So that the preciſe Notion of *Repentance*, you ſee, conſiſts in the Change of our *Mind*, that is, of our *Judgment* and *Reſolution*: and hence it is

called *being renewed in the ſpirit of our Mind*, Epheſ. iv. 23. and *being transformed by the renewing of our Mind* Rom. xii. 2. Conſonantly to which, *Hierocles*, tho' an *Heathen*, thus defines *Repentance*, ἡ δὲ μετάνοια ὡσπὲρ φιλοσοφίας ἀρχὴ γίνεται &c. that is, *Repentance* is the beginning of *Philoſophy*, 'tis a *Renunciation* of *Evil* Courſes, and a Preparation to a Life not to be repented of. So that when a Man hath repented, ſaith he, he neither quits *real* for *imaginary* Goods, nor chooſes *Evil* for fear of *unfortunate* Accidents; but conforms his *Judgment* and ſubmits his *Will* to the divine *Canons*. And thus you ſee what that *Repentance* is of which we are here bid to bring forth *meet Fruits*.

2. I proceed in the next place to ſhew what thoſe *Fruits* are which are *meet* for this *Repentance*. In general, they are ſuch *Fruits* or *Works* as are natural and agreeable to ſuch an *inward* Change of *Mind* and *Reſolution* as *Repentance* imports, or ſuch as may give a plain Demonſtration that you are *effectually* convinced in your *Judgment* of the Baſeneſs and Malignity of your paſt *ſinful* Courſes, and *ſincerely* reſolved to *diſcard* and *renounce* them for the future. For the *Fruits* of *Repentance* are nothing but the proper Acts and Operations of it, and 'tis then and then only that we bring forth theſe *Fruits*, when the *Effects* of a *real Repentance* do appear in our *Life* and

and *Converſation*, and our *Actions* do ſignify that our Judgment *condemns* our Faults, and our Will *renounces* them. And according to this account, the *Fruits* of *Repentance* may be reduced to theſe following Particulars.

1. An *actual* and *thorough* Reformation.
2. A *profound* Humility and Self-Abaſement.
3. A *great* and *tender* Modeſty in our Expectation.
4. Candor and Gentleneſs towards *others*.
5. Simplicity and Integrity of Manners towards the *offended* Party.
6. Caution and Warineſs for the future not to *offend again* in the ſame or the like Inſtances.

1. One neceſſary Fruit and Effect of our *Repentance* is an *actual* and *thorough* Reformation. If thoſe inviſible *Springs* of Action the *Judgment* and the *Will* be changed and rectified, the *Wheels* of Affection and the *Hand* of Practice muſt neceſſarily move more *regularly* and *orderly*: For all our inferior Powers being ſubject to the Authority of the *Will*, and carried about with the ſwing of this *Primum Mobile*, this firſt great *Orb* of the *Soul*, do naturally apply themſelves to the Execution of whatſoever *that* decrees and reſolves on; and to ſuppoſe a Man's *Judgment* and *Will* to be reformed when his *Life* is not, is to ſuppoſe that he

is not a *voluntary* Agent but a piece of *Clock-work*, that he is not determined in his Motions by *Choice* and *Deliberation*, but by *Weights* and *Plummets*, by neceſſary Preſſures and Impulſes; which Suppoſal not only ſtrips him out of all capacity of *Repentance*, but alſo contradicts all *Experience*. For this we are as ſenſible of as we are of our Hunger and Thirſt, that while we are our ſelves, and can *deliberate* and *chuſe*, we do nothing but what we *will*, nothing but what we *judge* to be good *pro hic & nunc*, and nothing but what we *chuſe* upon ſo *judging*. So that for a Man to pretend to be a *Penitent* in his *Heart* whilſt he is *unreformed* in his *Life*, is to *lye* againſt his own Experience. He knows and feels that what he doth he doth *voluntarily*, with Approbation of *Judgment* and Conſent of *Will*; and therefore if his *Actions* are bad, his *Judgment* and *Will* muſt be ſo too. You ſay you do *heartily repent* of your Sins, by which, if you underſtand what you ſay, you mean you do abſolutely *condemn* them in your *Judgment*, and peremptorily *diſclaim* them in your *Will*; but ſtill you muſt confeſs you lead a *bad* Life and *perſiſt* in many of thoſe *ſinful* Courſes of which you hope you have *heartily* repented: which is as much as if you ſhould ſay, I am fully reſolved I will play the *Knave* no *more*, but yet

I muſt

I muſt confeſs I do *lye* and *cheat* as much as *ever*; I am peremptorily determined to be very *temperate* and *chaſte*, but I muſt acknowledge I am very often *drunk*, and do very often *whore:* that is to ſay, you do what you won't do, you won't do what you do, your *Will* hath no Influence on your *Actions*, your *Actions* no relation to your *Will*, there is no Communication nor Intercourſe between your Power of *chuſing* and your Power of *acting*; ſo that as you cannot derive the Good that is in your *Will* to your *Practice*, ſo neither can you attribute the Evil that is in your *Practice* to your *Will*; all which is as falſe, and you know it is ſo, as any *Contradiction* in Nature. So that a thorough *Reformation* of Life, you ſee, is a neceſſary *Fruit* and *Effect* of *Repentance*, and you may as well ſuppoſe a *Sun* without Light, as *Repentance* without Amendment, if there be Time and Opportunity for it: for if a Man out-lives the Change of his *Mind*, there is not a more neceſſary Connexion between his *Life* and his *Motion*, than there is between the Change of his *Mind* and the Reformation of his *Manners*. And hence we find, that to *repent* and turn from our *evil* ways, to *repent* and do our *firſt* Works, to *repent* and be *converted*, to *repent* and turn to *God*, are in *Scripture* very often put together to denote the *inſeparable*

Connexion that there is between them.

2. Another neceſſary Fruit and Effect of our *Repentance* is a profound *Humility* and *Self-Abaſement*; for between *Pride* and *Repentance* there is as direct an Oppoſition, as between any *Vice* and *Vertue* whatſoever. To *repent* of a Fault is to be *aſhamed* of it, to *condemn* and *abhor* ones ſelf for it, to *hate* and *renounce* it as vile and abominable; and for a Man to do *this*, and at the ſame time to be highly opinionated of his own *Deſert*, and plumed with glorious Conceits of *himſelf*, is impoſſible: ſuch a Senſe of our own *Shame* and *Vileneſs* as is implied in a ſerious and hearty *Repentance*, can no more conſiſt with a *haughty* Look, a *puffed* and *ſelf-conceited* Mind, than Light with Darkneſs, or exceſſive Heat with bitter Cold. And upon this Account the *Baptiſt* might well upbraid the *Phariſees*, who were a Sect of the moſt *bloated* Monſters that appeared in *humane* Forms; and yet by offering themſelves to his *Baptiſm* of *Repentance*, pretended to be true Penitents. *O ye proud Wretches, do you pretend to Repentance? you that have ſwelled your ſelves with Self-Conceit till ye are ready to burſt again! you that are ſo full of your ſelves that you can never forbear overflowing with ſelf Applauſe and Vainglory! that like a company of Bladders are blown up with your own Breath, and ſwell and look big, and yet have nothing*

but

but Wind in you! go, bring forth fruits meet for Repentance; let me ſee you grow more humble, mean and proſtrate in your own Opinions, and when by this Effect I am ſatisfied that you are Penitents indeed, I will readily admit you to this my Baptiſm of Repentance. And God knows, we have too many ſuch *Phariſaical* Pretenders to *Repentance*, that under a *dejected* Look, a *ſolemn* Face and *whining* Tone do carry as *haughty ſelf-conceited* Minds as the proudeſt *Phariſees* of them all; that having been affected a little with the Senſe of their Sins, and caſt down with the frightful Apprehenſions of God's Wrath and Diſpleaſure, or that having ſuffered the Terrors of the *Spleen*, and acted through a few *tragical Scenes* of *Melancholy*, *Fancy*, and *Paſſion*, are preſently borne *aloft* out of the Spirit of Bondage, as they call it, with ſuch towering and magnificent *Conceits* of their own *Sanctity* and *Goodneſs*, as cauſes them to look down with Contempt upon ordinary *Mortals*, to *deſpiſe* their Superiors, and *villify* their Betters, and *ſeparate* themſelves into Parties, that *monopolize* all *Sanctity* and *Godlineſs* to themſelves; which, whatſoever theſe Men may think, is doubtleſs a very dangerous *Symptom* of a rotten and diſeaſed *Repentance*. For he that hath *truly* repented of his *Sins*, muſt neceſſarily have diſcovered Cauſe enough in them to *humble* and *abaſe*

himſelf in his own Eyes; and he that after ſuch a Proſpect of his own *Baſeneſs* and *Vileneſs* as is neceſſary to *Repentance*, can upon the next Review *applaud* and *admire* himſelf, and grow *fond* and *conceited* of his own Excellencies, hath a Judgment with two Ends like a *Proſpective*, with which he can *leſſen* or *magnify* himſelf as oft as he pleaſes.

3. Another neceſſary Fruit of *Repentance* is *Modeſty*. He that is ſo *throughly* ſenſible of a Fault as heartily to *repent* of it, will be thereby inſtructed to behave himſelf more *modeſtly* for the future. The Senſe of his Fault will *cool* his Confidence, and render him more *baſhful* and *moderate* in all his Pretenſions and Expectations. Should I ſee a Company of *Rebels*, upon a Pretence of having *repented* of their *Diſloyalty*, not only lay Claim to their Prince's *Mercy*, but preſently fall foul upon his faithful *Adherents*, and call *themſelves* his beſt and moſt loyal *Subjects*, and pretend to his greateſt *Favours* and *Rewards*; I ſhould certainly ſuſpect that they had *no Senſe* of their Guilt, but that in their Hearts they were as very *Rebels* as ever. And thus, when upon pretence that having heartily *repented* of our *Rebellions* againſt God, we preſently grow *bold* and *confident*, and begin to *crow* over thoſe who were never involved in our Guilts, as a Company of *carnal* and *moral* Wretches; when we are immediately

diately *flushed* with triumphant Assurances of God's Love, and our *Loyalty* to him, and nothing will serve our Turns but to be presently counted his *Darlings* and *Favourites*, it is a very ill sign that we were never yet *truly* ashamed of our *Rebellions*; that whatever we pretend, our *Wills* are as stubborn and disloyal as ever. And this was the true *Genius* of the *Pharisees* whom the *Baptist* doth here so severely reprehend; who being a *proud* and *conceited* Generation, as I shewed you before, made no doubt but *God* valued them at the same rate as *they* valued *themselves*; and tho' in reality they were a Pack of as ill-condition'd *Knaves* as ever walked demurely under the Cloak of *Religion*, tho' they were as *factious* and *turbulent*, as *covetous*, *griping*, and *oppressive* as the *Devil* himself could make them, yet because forsooth they were *zealous* for their *Party*, and the Opinions of their *Sect*, and the little *Modes* and *Affectations* that distinguish'd them from other Men, they blew themselves up into as high a *Confidence* of God's Favour to them, as if they had been the most *Saintly* and *God-like* Souls in the World, and did so wholly ingross and *monopolize* the Kindness of Heaven to *themselves*, that they would scarce allow the least share of it to any of the *rest* of Mankind; notwithstanding which they pretended to be *Penitents*, and as such, it

seems

ſeems would fain have been admitted to *John's Baptiſm.* But he, conſidering how *inconſiſtent* their Humour was to their Pretence, bids them go *bring forth fruits meet for Repentance:* As much as if he ſhould have ſaid, "You are a ſpecial ſort of Penitents indeed! one would think by the Confidence of your Talk and Behaviour, you had no Sins to repent of: why you are the godly Party, the only Favourites of Heaven, and will allow none but your ſelves to pretend to the Smiles of God's Countenance. Go for ſhame; if you would be accounted Penitents, behave your ſelves as ſuch, learn to be more modeſt, to live as becomes Perſons that are deeply affected with their Sins and aſhamed of their Guilts, and then perhaps I may ſee cauſe to admit you to my *Baptiſm.* And certainly 'tis a very ill ſign, when after a few Pangs of *Sorrow* and *Compunction* Men are preſently perking up into *Confidence* and *Aſſurance*; when they will needs be at the Top of the *Ladder* before ever they have touched the lowermoſt *Rounds*, and be gaping for ſecret *Incomes* and *Manifeſtations* of God's Love before they have manifeſted their *Repentance* by their *Obedience* to him. Sure if they were but as *ſenſible* of their Guilt as they *ought* to be, they would be contented to lie ſtill a while with their Mouths in the

the Duſt, and be ſatisfied that they are *not deſperate* of being reſtored to God's Favour, but are admitted to *hope* well, that by God's Bleſſing on their *Endeavours* they ſhall at length arrive to ſuch a ſtate of *Goodneſs* as will intitle them to God's *Favour* and *eternal* Life. And ſuch *Modeſty* the *Senſe* and *Shame* of their Guilt would teach them, if it were ſuch as is neceſſary to an *hearty* and *unfeigned* Repentance.

4. Another neceſſary Fruit of Repentance is *Candor* and *Gentleneſs* towards others. He that hath been ſo *affected* with the ſenſe of his *own* Faults as heartily to *repent* of them, will not be very forward to *cenſure* and *condemn* the Faults of *others*: his Mind is ſo *oppreſſed* with the load of his *own* Sins, that he is not at leiſure to find Fault with *other* Men; or if he were, yet deeply *conſcious*, as he is, what *abundant* Reaſon he hath to find Fault with *himſelf*, *that* gags and ſilences him. His *own* Sins fly in his Face while he is cenſuring *other* Mens; while he is pertly expoſing his *Neighbours* Fault, his *Conſcience* twits him in the Teeth, and tells him, the *Devil* rebukes Sin, ſo that in his own Defence he is forced to be *candid* and *favourable* to others, being conſcious ſhould he ſeverely reflect upon *their* Faults, he ſhould thereby libel and upbraid his *own*. And indeed, 'tis a certain ſign that Men have

have little or no *Senſe* of the Evil and Baſeneſs of their *own* Sins, when they are ſo *forward* and *flippant* in animadverting upon *other* Mens. Should you hear a *deformed Wretch* expoſing *another* Man for the *Blemiſhes* of his Nature, the *Diſproportion* of his Parts, or the *Irregularity* of his Features, you would doubtleſs conclude that either he imagin'd himſelf to be very *handſom*, or deſigned to make a *Satyr* on his own *Uglineſs*. And ſo when I hear Men that are great Sinners *themſelves* briskly declaiming againſt the Sins of *others*, I cannot but conclude that either they conceit themſelves to be *innocent*, or have a mind to expoſe their *own Guilt* and *Shame*; but to be ſure, were they but as *ſenſible* of their *own* Shame as they ought to be, that would reſtrain them from throwing Dirt upon others. And doubtleſs it was upon this Conſideration among others, that the *Baptiſt* doth here ſo tartly upbraid the *Phariſees*; who tho' they had rendred themſelves by their *malignant* Tempers and Practices the greateſt *Peſts* and *Miſchiefs* of *Soceity*, the moſt direct *Antipodes* to the Nature of God, and the eternal Laws of *Righteouſneſs*, were yet the ſevereſt *Cenſurers* of other Mens Actions in the World. What tragical Clamours did they make againſt the *Publicans* and *Sinners* for playing the *Beaſt* while they themſelves plaid

the

the *Devil*? What baſe Interpretations did they make of the *holy* and *innocent* Freedoms of our *Saviour*, whom becauſe he was not of their *ſower* and *unſociable* Temper, they damned for a *Wine-bibber, and a Friend of Publicans and Sinners*? In a word, who was more forward than *they* to *emblazon* the Faults of *other* Men, to fetch and carry *ſcandalous* Reports, and ſhake their Heads at the Iniquities of the *Times*, when, God knows, they *themſelves* were the greateſt *Plagues* and *Scandals* of the Age they lived in? And with all this *Rancor* and *Bitterneſs* of Temper they would needs pretend to be *Penitents*; upon which the Baptiſt bids them *bring forth* ſuch *Fruits* as were *proper* for *Penitents*. As if he ſhould have ſaid, "One "may eaſily diſcern what *goodly* Penitents "you are, how *deeply* you are affected with "your *own* Sins by the Noiſe and Clamour "you make againſt *other* Mens: you have "Wickedneſs enough of your *own* to *cenſure* "and make *Invectives* on, but while you "ſhould be looking *inwards*, your Eyes "are in the *Ends* of the Earth, obſerving "*other* Mens Faults and Miſcarriges. Go, "if you would appear to be Penitents, "learn to be more *ſevere* upon your *ſelves* "and more *candid* to *other* Men, to make "the worſt of your *own* Faults, and the "*beſt* of your *Neighbours*; and then I ſhall "have

" have reaſon to hope that you are Penitents " *indeed.* But 'tis fulſome *Hypocriſy* for Men to pretend to *Repentance* whilſt they are bitterly *cenſorious* and apt to *judge* hardly of *other* Men. And to Men of Underſtanding there is nothing can be more *ridiculous*, than to ſee one that is juſt fallen off from a *leud* and *diſſolute* Courſe of Life, preſently ſet up for a *Cenſor* of the *Age*, and with a *wiſe* and *ſerious* Forehead *animadverting* upon the Freedoms, and *declaiming* againſt the *Debaucheries* of this or t'other Man; which whatſoever he may think, is a plain Demonſtration that he hath never been *duly affected* with the Senſe of his *own* Sin, and that he is only *changing* one kind of *Wickedneſs* for another. For were he but *throughly* convinced how bad he hath been *himſelf*, he would be aſhamed to *clamour*, and *inveigh* againſt other Men, and the great ſenſe he would have of the *Beam* in his *own* Eye, would make him leſs apt to take notice of the *Mote* in his *Neighbours*.

5. Another neceſſary Fruit of Repentance is, *Simplicity* of Heart and *Integrity* of Manners towards the *Party* offended; for tho 'tis a *Maxim* in *Policy* not to truſt to a reconciled *Enemy*, yet could I be ſecure of the *Sincerity* of his *Reconciliation*, I ſhould have more reaſon to truſt him than a *conſtant* Friend; becauſe if he be *throughly* ſenſible that he hath

unjuſtly

unjuſtly offended me and hath *heartily* repented of it, 'tis reaſonably to be ſuppoſed that he will not only uſe me as a *Friend* for the future, but as a *Friend* whom he hath *injur'd* and unjuſtly *provoked*, and conſequently that the ſenſe of the *Injury* he hath done me, will make him *ſupererogate* in Friendſhip, and by a *Superabundance* of good Offices endeavour not only to *diſcharge* what the Laws of *Friendſhip* exact, but alſo to *expiate* the *unjuſt* Provocations he hath given me. For the very *Senſe* of a paſt Injury, when it is *heartily* repented of, doth naturally kindle into a *cordial* Affection towards him whom we have *injured:* And thus, if we have *heartily* repented of our Sins againſt God, the *Senſe* of what is *paſt* will render us more *ſincere* and *cordial* to him for the *future*; and by how much the more we have *provoked* and *offended* him, by ſo much the more *ſtudious* we ſhall be to *ſerve* and *obey* him. But if our pretended *Repentance* produces in us no other Effect but an *outward* Shew of Obedience, and renders us more ſtudious to *appear* good than to *be* ſo; if it puts us upon *picking* and *chuſing* our Duty, upon being *zealous* about *ſmall* things to compenſate our Negligence and Remiſſneſs about *great*, it is an infallible ſign that it is meerly *pretended*, and that all the *Shews* we make of Reconciliation are nothing but

meer

meer *Vizors* and *Counterfeits*. And ſuch was the Temper and Diſpoſition of the *Phariſees*, they took care to *diſguiſe* themſelves in a pompous *Form* of *Godlineſs*, and to carry a very demure and ſanctified *Outſide*. Their *Looks* were ſolemn, auſtere, and mortified, their *Tongues* all tipt with the *Language* of *Canaan*, their *Motions* and *Geſtures* were artificially compoſed to the *Tune* of a humble and heavenly Mind. They *faſted* thrice a Week, and *prayed* ſo long that they made all the Streets ring again with their *loud* and *clamorous* Devotions, and gave *Alms* too now and then in a good *Eccho* whence they might be ſure to hear their Charities *reſounded* after them in *Praiſes* and *Commendations*. They kept a mighty Noiſe about the *Fringes* and *Phylacteries*, the *external* Circumſtances and Appendages of *Religion*, and were moſt zealous Aſſertors of *pure Ordinances* and *pure Worſhip*: but under all this Formality our *Saviour* tells them they were *whited Sepulchres*, who tho' they look glorioufly *without*, are full of Rottenneſs *within*. For this demure *Outſide* of theirs was only a *Diſguiſe* under which they cheated and plaid the Knaves more ſecurely. Their *long* Prayers were nothing but ſpecious Introductions to their *Rapines* and *Oppreſſions*. Their *Alms* were their *Decoys* which they ſent forth on purpoſe to train *ſimple* and *well-meaning* People

ple into their nets. Their zeal for the *Mint and Cummin* was the varniſh of their *Fraud* and *Injuſtice*. Their *long Faſts* for *Reformation* were ſtirups to their *Ambition* of being uppermoſt, and their conſtant *Refreſhments* after them were *Widows* and *Orphans* tears. In a word, they would cheat in ſaintly *Language*, play the *Knaves* with their Hands and Eyes lift up to *Heaven*, and while they ſeemed to be as *fervent* as *Angels* in their *Devotions*, they were as *falſe* and *treacherous* as *Devils* in their *Dealings*. And yet theſe *baſe* People would needs have been admitted for *Penitents* to the *Baptiſm* of *John*; who conſidering the *Inconſiſtency* of their Temper with their *Pretence*, tartly upbraids them and bids them *bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance*; that is, learn to be more *ſimple* and *ſincere* in their Carriage towards their offended *God*, ſtudy more to *be* Penitents than to *appear* ſuch; contract your *Shew* into *Reality*, and let it appear by your *ſincere Reſpect* to God, and *Devotion* to his Service, that you do *heartily* repent of your *Rebellions* againſt him. And certainly there can be nothing more *ſuſpitious* than for a young *Penitent* to affect to make a great *Shew* of *Religion*; for true *Repentance* is naturally *baſhful* and *modeſt*, it ſhuns the *Theater*, the tops of houſes, and the corners of Streets, and is beſt pleaſed with *Silence*

and *Retirement*; and provided *God ſees* its Tears and *hears* its Sighs and holy Purpoſes, it deſires no *other Spectator* or *Auditor*. For the great Deſign of a *Penitent* is to reconcile himſelf to *God*, and if he be but ſo *ſenſible* of his Sin as *heartily* to repent of it; by how much the more he hath *offended* him for the time *paſt*, by ſo much the more he will ſtudy to *pleaſe* him for the time *to come*.

6. And laſtly, Another neceſſary Fruit of *Repentance* is *Caution* and *Warineſs* for the *future* not to offend again in the ſame or the like Inſtances. For *Repentance* is a *penal Duty* in which a Man undergoes ſome degree of the *ſmart* and *puniſhment* of his Fault, in which he indures the *Shame* and *Confuſion* of a *guilty* Mind, the *Regrets* and *Remorſes* of an *awaken'd* Conſcience; and the burnt Child, we ſay, will dread the Fire. He that hath undergon the *ſevere* Diſcipline of a *deep* and *ſolemn* Repentance will be ſure to take *warning* by it; and be very *cautious* for the *future* not to approach thoſe ſins for which he hath *ſmarted* ſo ſeverely. And hence we find that *Repentance* is not only expreſſed in Scripture by μετάνοια which ſignifies a Change of Mind, but alſo by μεταμέλεια which ſignifies an *After-Care*; which ſhews that though the *Eſſence* of Repentance conſiſts in the μετάνοια or *Change* of our mind, yet μεταμέλεια, or an *After-Care* to avoid

thoſe

thoſe ſins from which our Minds are changed and converted, is a neceſſary *Effect* and *Fruit* of Repentance; it being an uſual *Figure* in *Scripture* to expreſs *Cauſes* by their moſt natural and eaſie Effects. And indeed when I ſee Men boldly *approaching* and *venturing* towards thoſe Vices of which they pretend to have *heartily* repented, I cannot but ſuſpect that their *Repentance* is nothing but a *Pretence*, that 'twas only a preſent *Pet* and *Diſtaſte* that they took againſt their ſin upon ſome ungrateful *Accident*, or under a ſudden *Qualm* of Conſcience, and that it never proceeded ſo far as to a *cool* and *deliberate Change* of their Judgment and Reſolution concerning it. For certainly had they undergon thoſe *Laſhes* of Conſcience, thoſe *ſharp* and *cutting* Reflections that are uſually neceſſary to *prepare* the way for ſuch a *Change*, they could never be ſo fool-hardy as to *play upon the hole of the Aſp* again, and to thruſt their *hands into the den of the Cockatrice* after they have been ſo ſeverely *ſtung* by it; and the Remembrance of thoſe *Agonies* of *Soul*, thoſe *Spaſms* and *Convulſions* of *Conſcience* which their ſin hath already coſt them, would make them *tremble* to think of it and be inſtead of a *Sea-mark* to forewarn and terrify them from approaching it again. But ſuch was the humour of the *Phariſees*, that though they *pretended* to be *Penitents*, yet

when it ſerved their *Cauſe* and *Intereſt* they were as *bold* and *venturous* at an *evil Action* as ever. For ſo our *Saviour* long after this Reprehenſion of the *Baptiſt*, and conſequently after this their pretence of *Repentance*, charges them with being as *intimate* and *familiar* with their *old Vices* as ever. It was their way indeed, and ſo it was always, to make their Religion *a Cloak* and *Pretence* for their *Wickedneſs*; but to ſerve their own *Faction*, which they called propagating the *Glory of God*, they eſteemed nothing *unlawful*. And though in any point that was repugnant to the Intereſt of their *Sect* they were the moſt *nice* and *ſcrupulous* People in the World; yet to ſerve their *Cauſe* they could *lye* and *forſwear* themſelves with the help of a juggling Reſerve or Diſtinction, as our *Saviour* obſerves of them *Matth.* xxiii. 16. And no doubt but they could have taken *Oaths* and *Sacraments* too againſt their *Conſciences* to keep their Places in the *Sanhedrim*, and there carry on their *factious* and *turbulent* Deſigns. It being therefore evident by their being ſo *venturous* upon *ſinful* Actions, that their Pretence to *Repentance* was *falſe*, the *Baptiſt* diſmiſſes them with this ſevere *Admonition, go bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance*; i. e. let me ſee you more *wary* and *cautious* of running into thoſe *ſinful* Courſes of which you now pretend to *repent*, and then

then I ſhall have ſome reaſon to *believe* that you are *Penitents* indeed. And certainly while a Man affects to draw *near* to his *old* Sins, and to dwell in the *Neighbourhood* of them, whilſt he delights in their *Remembrance*, and loves to *ſport* and *entertain* himſelf with their phantaſtick Pleaſures, while he affects to dwell within *View* of their Temptations, to venture to the very *Edge* and *Brink* of them, to the very *utmoſt* Limits of *lawful* and *innocent*; it is a very ill ſign that he never had that thorough Senſe of their *Malignity* and *Danger* that is neceſſary to an hearty *Repentance*; for if he had, he would be *afraid* of all *Approaches* and *Tendencies* towards them, and be ready to *ſtart* and *run* away not only from the *ſins* themſelves but even from their *Appearances* and *Reſemblances*.

And thus I have endeavoured to give you an Account of the natural *Fruits* and *Effects* of true *Repentance*, by conſidering of which and impartially conſulting our own *Experience* of our ſelves, we may eaſily determine whether the *Repentance* we pretend to, if we pretend to any at all, be *true* or *falſe*. We live in an *Age* that doth ſo abound with all *ſorts* and *degrees* of *Wickedneſs*, that a Man can hardly mention any kind of *Wickedneſs*, or *party* of wicked men that are branded for ſuch either in *Sacred* or *Profane* Hiſtory, but

it is preſently ſuſpected that his deſign is to reproach and expoſe ſome *Party* or other among our ſelves. And I confeſs if men will ſet themſelves to *gueſſing* who is meant by the *Phariſees*, and who by the *Sadducees*, they may find *Parallels* enough of both in this *degenerate* Age; and, God knows they go together too often now in purſuance of *worſe Deſigns* than thoſe *Sadducees* and *Phariſees* that came together to *John*'s *Baptiſm*. But if any ſhould ask me who or what *Party* of Men it is I reflect upon in theſe ſevere *Repreſentations* I have made of *Phariſaical Pretenders* to *Repentance*, I can truly anſwer that I intend no *one Party* of whatſoever Denomination; there being among *all Parties* a great many that do not ſo *much* as pretend to *Repentance*, and among *moſt*, as I verily hope, a great many that do more than *pretend* to it. But the *Phariſees* whom I mean are thoſe whom the *Baptiſt* and after him our *Saviour* himſelf do ſo ſmartly inveigh againſt; and if you pleaſe to conſult St. *Matthew* xxiii. you will there find them treated with much *more* Severity by the *meekeſt* and moſt *charitable* Perſon that ever was. But if in any *Party* among our ſelves there be any ſuch *Hypocrites* and *falſe Pretenders* to Repentance as theſe *Phariſees* were, as I doubt there are too many among *all Parties*, I muſt then ingenuouſly acknowledge that I mean *them* too.

And

And if any thing that hath been ſaid ſhould *reflect* upon and *gall* them, they ought to conſider that that is their *own* Fault. *They* may avoid *being* Hypocrites, but *We* muſt not avoid *declaiming* againſt *Hypocriſy*, and when ever we do ſo, we *muſt* reflect upon them whether we will or no. If Men will be *Hypocrites*, our *Saviour's Sermon* as well as *this* will upbraid and expoſe them, and if it doth ſo, 'tis not *his* Fault but *theirs* who made *themſelves* obnoxious to his *Satyrs* and *Invectives*. The only way for you to avoid the Edge of ſuch Reflections is to become *honeſt* and *ſincere Penitents*, but if you will not, you muſt thank *your ſelves*, if it cuts and wounds you. For if our *Saviour* himſelf had ſtood this day in this Place, and preached over his *Sermon* to the *Phariſees*, it would have been impoſſible for you not to have been *touched* and *concerned* at it, and if *you* ſhould be ſo diſingenuous as to fall foul on *me*, as *they* did on *him*, I will only propoſe St. *Pauls Quere* to you, *am I therefore become your Enemy, becauſe I tell you the Truth?* and ſo I have done with the ſecond thing propoſed, which was to ſhew you what are the proper *Fruits* and *Effects* of Repentance.

3. I now proceed to the *Third* and *laſt* Argument, namely to ſhew the *indiſpenſible Neceſſity* of bringing forth theſe *Fruits*, which I ſhall endeavour to make appear by theſe following Inſtances.

1. That we ſhould bring forth theſe *meet Fruits* of Repentance is neceſſary to the *Satisfaction* of *God*.

2. It is neceſſary to the *Satisfaction* of our own *Conſciences*.

3. It is neceſſary to the *Obligation* of *Repentance*.

4. It is neceſſary to the *Perfection* of our *Natures*.

1. That we ſhould bring forth theſe *meet Fruits* of Repentance is neceſſary to the *Satisfaction* of *God*. For though it be wholly owing to Chriſt's *Satisfaction*, that loſt Sinners are admitted to a Poſſibility of *recovering* themſelves by the *After-game* of *Repentance*, yet God we ſee hath declared, that *without* our *Repentance* he will not be *ſatisfyed*. Neither indeed doth Chriſt's *Satisfaction* extend to final *Impenitence*, it cancels *none* of our Guilts but only thoſe which we heartily *repent* of, but as to all the *reſt* we are as accountable to the *Tribunal* of God as if he had *never* died for us. So that all the Favour which the meritorious *ſatisfaction* of our *Saviour* hath obtained for us is only this, that our *Repentance* ſhall be accepted inſtead of our *Puniſhment*, that is, that if we unfeignedly *repent* of our ſins, we ſhall thereupon be ſet as right in the ſight of *God* and in the court of *Heaven*, as if we had undergon the *utmoſt* Rigor of the *Law*. So that now our

Repentance

Repentance being accepted of by God inſtead of our *Puniſhment*, it is neceſſary that it ſhould be ſuch a *Repentance* as doth in ſome meaſure *anſwer* and *fulfil* the Ends of our *Puniſhment*. For ſince 'tis for *wiſe* and *good* Ends that God puniſhes, it is not to be expected that he will accept of any thing in the ſtead of our *Puniſhment* which doth not in ſome meaſure *fulfil* and *accompliſh* thoſe Ends; and this no *Repentance* can do but that which produces the proper *Fruits* of *Repentance*. For the principal End of *Puniſhment* is either to amend the *Criminal* himſelf, or to warn *others* not to imitate his *Sins* by the Example of his *Sufferings*, which Ends can never be effected by our *Repentance* unleſs it produce in us the viſible *Fruits* of *Amendment*. For ſuppoſe it poſſible that I ſhould have *internally* repented, *i. e.* that my *Mind* ſhould be really *chang'd*, that in my *Judgment* I ſhould abſolutely *condemn* my ſinful Courſes, and in my *Will* I ſhould be peremptorily *reſolved* againſt them, and no actual and viſible *Reformation* ſhould follow; if this I ſay were poſſible, it is plain my *Repentance* would be wholly *ineffectual* both as to my *own* Amendment and the Amendment of *others*. If indeed I actually *avoided* the Sins I condemn and am reſolved againſt, my *Repentance* would effect the Ends of my *Puniſhment*, that is, it would make me a

better

better Man, it would *reform* my Nature, *rectify* my Motions, and *extinguiſh* my bad Inclinations and corrupt Principles, and prove an effectual Means to reform *others* too; who by the *good Example* of my *Actions* might be as effectually wrought upon, as by the *ſad Example* of my *Sufferings*. And God having thus obtained his Ends by my *Repentance*, there is very good reaſon why he ſhould diſpenſe with my *Puniſhment*. But if after I have *condemned* my Sin and *reſolved* againſt it, neither my *ſelf* nor *other* Men can be *reform'd* and *amended* by it, this Change of my *Mind* will have no influence on my *Nature*, it will never correct its *diſorderly* Affections, nor ſubdue its *wild* and *extravagant* Inclinations; but leave it altogether as *vicious* and *degenerate* as it found it. Neither will it have any good Influence upon *others*, becauſe it doth not appear to them in any *viſible* Effects. So that it is only by bringing forth its natural *Fruits* that our *Repentance* or *Change* of *Mind* ſerves the Ends of Gods *Puniſhments*, and 'tis unreaſonable to expect that God ſhould *accept* of our *Repentance* for our *Puniſhment*, when it doth not at all ſerve the *purpoſe* of our *Puniſhment*. For this would be to *defeat* himſelf, to *countermine* and *baffle* his own Intentions, and fondly to give up his *wiſe* and *good* Ends to the *Obſtinacy* and *Perverſneſs* of his Creatures.

You

You would fain have God *diſpenſe* with your *Puniſhment*; well, but you ought to conſider that there are very *wiſe* and *good* Ends that he drives at in *puniſhing* you. Would you have him *give up* theſe Ends? that is *unreaſonable*, that is to deſire him to acknowledge that his Ends are not *worth* aiming at. Why what is to be done then? I will tell you what, you muſt give him his *Ends* by your *Repentance*, that is, by bringing forth *ſuch* Fruits of *Repentance* as will effectually amend *you*, and contribute to amend *others*, and then you may be ſecure that God will be *ſatisfyed*; but if not, be aſſured he will *proſecute* his Ends by your *Puniſhment* and take care to warn *others* by the ſad *example* of *your* Sufferings, ſince you would not take care to warn them by the good *example* of your *Actions*.

2. That we ſhould bring forth theſe meet *Fruits* of *Repentance* is alſo neceſſary to the *Satisfaction* of our *Conſciences*; for without ſuch *Fruits* a Man can never be rationally ſatisfyed that his *Repentance* is *real* and *ſincere* for if we have made any Obſervation upon *our ſelves*, we cannot but be ſenſible of our own *Fickleneſs* and *Mutability*, how many *Sorts* of Men we are under our ſeveral *Circumſtances*, how our *Mind* veers about upon every change of Wind, and into what *contrary* Tempers it is moulded upon contrary Chances

Chances and Contingencies. And having ſuch an aboundant Experience of our own *Inconſiſtency*, how can we rationally conclude upon every *Variation* of Temper. That this or that is our *fixt* Judgment or our *ſtanding* Reſolution, that the Mind we are *now* in will not Change upon the next Change of our *Circumſtances*, and that when *contrary* Accidents occur we ſhall not take up *contrary* Reſolutions; eſpecially when our *Reſolutions* do oppoſe our *Inclinations*, and our *Inclinations* are perpetually importuned and ſollicited by outward *Objects* and *Temptations*; which is our Caſe in the matter of *Repentance*. In this caſe for Men to conclude from the *preſent* Bent and Inclination of their *Wills* that they are ſteadily *fix'd* and *determined* to good Reſolutions is a piece of very unreaſonable *Self-Aſſurance*; for when they know themſelves to be ſo *fickle* and *inconſtant* in matters to which their Inclinations are more *indifferent*, how much reaſon have they to ſuſpect the Firmneſs of *thoſe* Reſolutions to which their Inclinations are ſo extreamly *averſe*, and from which ſo many outward *Objects* are continually beckoning and inviting them? in this caſe therefore we have no other way to be rationally ſatisfied of the *Firmneſs* and *Stability* of the change of our Mind but only by the *Fruits* and *Effects* of it, for, if when it hath Opportunity, it doth

doth not paſs forth into *Action*, and diſplay it ſelf upon our Lives in an anſwerable *Practice*, if it doth not ordinarily *reſtrain* us from thoſe *Evils* it condemns and reſolves againſt, and *ſpur* us *on* to thoſe *good* things it approves and conſents to, it is moſt certain it is a mere *Cheat* and *Impoſture*. For let Men ſay what they pleaſe, it is *impoſſible* that any Man ſhould live in thoſe *vicious* Courſes which they abſolutely *condemn* and are ſincerely *reſolved* againſt they may now and then *quarrel* at their ſins and take *Pet* againſt them upon ſome little *Diſappointment* or unhandſome *Accident*, and in the Heat of their *Diſtaſte* they may *condemn* and *renounce* them, but if when their Paſſion is allayed, they *reſent* and *return* to them again, it is plain that their *Minds* were never changed, and that the Current of their *Judgment* and *Will* was only interupted by a contrary Guſt; but that it was never diverted into a *contrary* Channel. So that what our *Saviour* aſſerts of Men is as true of their Repentance, *the Tree is known by its Fruits*; if our *Repentance* be *genuine*, it will bring forth the Fruit of *Reformation*, but if it be *barren* or bring forth nothing but *Leaves* and good *Words* and *Profeſſions*, it is certainly *Spurious* and *Hypocritical*. However therefore Men may juggle with and impoſe upon their *Conſciences* with falſe *Shews* and *Semblances*, they can never

never hope to be rationally *ſatisfied* of the *Truth* of their Repentance till the natural *Fruits* and *Effects* of it appear in their *Lives* and *Converſations.*

3. That we ſhould bring forth theſe meet *Fruits* of Repentance, is alſo neceſſary to ſatisfy the *Obligation* of *Repentance:* for *Repentance* is not required of us meerly for its *own* ſake, but in order to the *Fruits* and *Effects* of it; and the Reaſon why God obliges us to this *Change* of our *Mind,* is, becauſe it is a neceſſary Introduction to a thorough *Change* and *Reformation* of our *Manners*; and for a Man to condemn Sin in his Judgment meerly to *condemn* it, and reſolve againſt it in his *Will* meerly to *reſolve* againſt it, is ſo far from being a *Vertue,* that it is a ridiculous *Impertinence.* And if we ſtill *practiſe* what we *condemn,* and *do* what we *reſolve* againſt, we are ſo far from anſwering the Obligation of *Repentance,* that we do but *inhance* and *aggravate* our *Impenitence.* For he that *doth* what he *condemns* ſins againſt his *Knowledge,* and flies in the face of his own *Convictions*; and he that *doth* what he *reſolves* againſt, ſins againſt his *Promiſe,* and baſely *falſifies* his own Engagements. So that the meer Change of our *Mind,* you ſee, *abſtractedly* conſidered, doth by no means anſwer the Obligation to *Repentance,* becauſe the Obligation doth not terminate in it *ſelf,* but

but is made with reſpect to the *natural Effects* of ſuch a Change; and becauſe this Change in it *ſelf* is of no farther Uſe and Significancy in *Religion* than as it is pregnant with and productive of thoſe *Effects*. For either the *Sin* which I condemn in my *Judgment* is ſuch an *Evil* as I ought to *ſhun* and *avoid*, or it is not; if it be not, it is no Vertue for me to *condemn* that for an *Evil* which I need not take care to avoid; if it be, it is a Folly to *condemn* it, unleſs I alſo *avoid* it. And ſo again, either the *Duty* I conſent to and reſolve upon in my *Will* is neceſſary to be done, or it is not; if it be not, it is unneceſſary for me to *reſolve* to do it; if it be, it is in vain to *reſolve* to do it unleſs I *perform* my Reſolution. For as a *Cypher* which is only in order to a *Number* ſignifies nothing, unleſs a *Number* be added to it; ſo a *Reſolution*, which is only in order to *Action*, is perfectly inſignificant, unleſs it be ſeconded with *Action*. And ſince it is nothing but the Neceſſity of *doing* what we reſolve that can make it neceſſary for us to *reſolve* to do it, we muſt either deny the Neceſſity even of our *reſolving* to amend, or acknowledge the Neceſſity of our *actual Amendment*. So that that *inward* Change of our *Mind* which *Repentance* imports being required only in order to the *outward* Change of our *Manners*, it is impoſſible we ſhould ſatisfy

the

the Obligation of *Repentance* without bringing forth the *Fruits* of actual Amendment.

4. And laſtly; That we ſhould bring forth theſe *meet Fruits* of Repentance is alſo neceſſary to *accompliſh* the great Work and Deſign of *Repentance*, which is to repair the *Decays* and *Ruins* of our Nature, and recover it from the *Diſeaſes* it hath contracted by ſinful Courſes to a State of *Health* and *Perfection*. For *Repentances* ſuppoſe a *degeneracy* of our Nature, and the great Buſineſs and Deſign of it is to *raiſe* and *recover* us. And hence the *Prodigals* Repentance is called *coming to himſelf* Luke xv. 17. implying that before he was gone from himſelf, that he had abandoned his Reaſon by which he was conſtituted a *Man*, forſaken the *Guide* and leading *Principle* of his Nature, and was degenerated either into a *Beaſt* or a *Devil*; which is a very proper Deſcription of the State of *Sinners*, who when they depart from *God* do depart from *themſelves*, and run out of *Humanity* into *Beſtiality* or *Deviliſhneſs*. For they do not govern themſelves by *Reaſon* as Men ſhould do, but by their *Paſſions* and *Appetites* as *Beaſts* and *Devils* do; they turn a deaf Ear to the voice of their *Reaſon* and *Conſcience*, and conſtantly chuſe and refuſe what their own black *Paſſions* or brutiſh Appetites direct them, and in the whole courſe of their Lives do act like upright

right *Beaſts* or incarnate *Devils*. The proper buſineſs therefore of *Repentance* is to bring back theſe *Vagrants* to themſelves, and reſtore them to their *Wits* and *Reaſon*, to reſcue them out of the Hands of *Paſſion* and Appetite, and put them under the Power of *Reaſon* and *Conſcience*, that ſo for the future they may live like themſelves and as becomes *rational Beings* that are related to God and one another. This is the proper work of *Repentance*, which it can never effect without it bring forth its natural *Fruits*. For he that ſo repents of his *evil* Courſes, as not to *correct* and *reform* them, how is it poſſible he ſhould ever be the *better* for it, when he moves not a ſtep forward from the *corrupt* and *degenerate* State of his nature, but only dances round in a Circle, and *ſins* and *repents*, and *repents* and *ſins*, and at laſt ſtill *returns* to the ſame point. The only way to reform our *Nature* and *ſubject* its Paſſions and Appetites to its *Reaſon*, is to live *well*, and regulate our Actions by the Laws of *Reaſon* and *Righteouſneſs*; by this we ſhall by degrees *tame* and *reduce* our irregular Inclinations, and readvance our *Reaſon* to its native *Throne* and *Dominion*: by forcing our ſelves, as we muſt do at firſt, to the *Practice* of *Vertue* and *Religion*, we ſhall by degrees acquire *vertuous Diſpoſitions*, and thoſe will improve into *vertuous Habits*, and thoſe in

the end will grow to *Perfection.* But if we only *condemn* our Sins and *reſolve* againſt them, but do not actually *renounce* and *forſake* them; inſtead of *bettering* our Nature we ſhall more and more *debauch* and *deprave* it, and be ſtill *declining* from bad to worſe, and from worſe to worſe, till at laſt our Diſeaſe becomes *deſperate* and *incurable.* So that it is indiſpenſibly neceſſary, you ſee, that we ſhould bring forth *Fruits meet for Repentance*, becauſe, unleſs we do, it is impoſſible our *Repentance* ſhould ever *accompliſh* the Work it is deſigned for; that it ſhould *heal* and *reform* our nature, *extinguiſh* its *vicious* Inclinations, and *adorn* it with thoſe *Graces* wherein its *Beauty* and *Perfection* conſiſts: and we were every whit as good *not* to repent at *all*, as to repent ſo as to be never the *better* for it. And now give me leave to conclude this Argument with a few Inferences.

1. From hence I infer what a *ridiculous* thing it is for Men to make a fond *Pretence* of zeal for *Religion*, while the direct *Contraries* to all the natural *Fruits* of *Repentance* do moſt viſibly appear in their *Lives* and *Converſations.* I confeſs of all the offices that belong to a *Preacher*, I am naturally the moſt averſe to that of *Reprehenſion.* I do not love to expoſe Mens *Faults*, and rake in their filthy *Dunghils*; and 'tis not only my *Charity* to

to *Mankind* but alſo the Indiſpoſition of my Nature to find fault, that makes me ſo heartily wiſh, *O would to God that Men were once ſo good as to need no Reprehenſion*! that ſo we might have nothing to do but to *praiſe* and *incourage* them, to *excite* them to go *on* with the Comforts of *Religion* and the juſt Applauſes and *Encomiums* of their *Vertues*. But alas we live in an *Age* that would make a Stone to ſpeak, and force any Man of any *Conſcience*, in deſpite of all the *Candor* and *Modeſty* of his nature, to cry aloud againſt the fulſom *Hypocriſies* and *Impoſtures* that look through our moſt glorious Pretences to *Religion*. For, for God's ſake Sirs, is it not a Shame, a burning Shame to hear a Company of profeſſed *Atheiſts* and notorious *Knaves* ſet up for *Zealots* and *Reformers*, and raiſe a Clamour for *Liberty* of *Conſcience*, and *pure Ordinances*? as for the *ſober* and *pious Diſſenters*, I can bear their miſtakes with as much Tenderneſs and Compaſſion as any Man, and can make them as large *Allowances* as I could reaſonably deſire for my *ſelf*, if I were in their Condition. But when I ſee Men rank themſelves under the *Banners* of *Religion*, that live in open *Hoſtility* to its Commands and Precepts, that make no Conſcience of *blaſpheming* the Name of *God*, traducing his *Vicegerents* and *Repreſentatives*, defaming and defrauding their *Neighbours*, and expoſing

the moſt *Sacred* and *Serious* things to *Scorn* and *Deriſion*; I cannot but ſuſpect that there is Miſchief behind the *Curtain*, what zealous *Appearances* ſoever they may make upon the *Stage*. For it can never enter into my Head, and I wonder how it ſhould into any Bodies elſe, that thoſe Men ſhould ever deſign well to *Religion*, whoſe Principles and Practices are ſo openly *irreligious*. They may pretend *Religion*, for that is ſo *venerable* a Name that 'twill ſerve to ſet a *fair Colour* upon the uglieſt Intentions; but tho' we may be deceived by a well diſguiſed *Hypocriſy*, yet ſure we can never believe that *Profaneneſs* is in earneſt, when it pretends to be zealous for *Religion* and a through Reformation. O would to God that Men would at laſt be ſo honeſt as to *appear* what they *are*, or at leaſt not be ſo *ridiculous*, as to *pretend* the quite *contrary* to what they *appear!* it would make any honeſt heart bleed to ſee how *Religion*, how the *Proteſtant Religion* is rendred cheap and vile by the *impudent Pretences* which bad Men make to it; Men whoſe Lives are bad enough to diſgrace *Popery* it ſelf, and who are *Proteſtants* only becauſe they are not *Papiſts*. In the name of God, Sirs, what have you to do with any *Religion*, and much more with the *Proteſtant*, which by its *pure* and *honeſt* Principles defies and renounces you, which *abominates* your deſigns and *diſ-*

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avows your Actions, and *bluſhes* to ſee how you *Profane* and *Scandalize* it by pretending *Friendſhip* to and *Familiarity* with it. For what will ſtrangers think of it, that underſtand not its *Principles*, when they hear ſuch as *you* claim ſuch an *intimate* Acquaintance with it? how prone will they be to ſuſpect that 'tis a *Religion* for your *tooth*, and that it *ſhelters* and *patronizes* you in all your *Wickedneſs*? wherefore for God's ſake be at length ſo *juſt* to the Reputation of that *Religion* you pretend ſo much *zeal* for, as either to bring forth the *Fruits* of it by *living* up to its *Principles*, or not concern your ſelves any farther about it. For this I am ſure of, while ſuch as you *pretend* to it, it loſes much more by the *Diſgrace* which your Lives do caſt upon it, then ever it is like to *gain* by your *zeal* and your *Clamour* for it.

2. Hence I alſo infer how extreamly *inſufficient* that *Repentance* is, which the *Church of Rome* doth frankly approve and allow of; which is ſuch as plainly *evacuates* and *ſuperſedes* the Neceſſity of bringing forth the natural *Fruits* of *Repentance*; as any one may eaſily apprehend that will but take the pains impartially to conſider the *Chain* of that *Churches* Principles. For firſt the *Council of Trent* teaches that *Attrition*, which is nothing but a *Sorrow* for Sin proceeding from the

Fear of Puniſhments, doth diſpoſe Men to receive *Grace* in the *Sacrament of Penance*, and that all the *Sacraments* of the *Goſpel*, of which *Penance* is one, do actually confer grace upon thoſe that are diſpoſed for it. So that if he hath but the *Grace* to be *afraid* of *Hell* and to be *ſorry* that he is in *Danger* of it, it is but *confeſſing* his Sins to a *Prieſt* and undergoing a ſhort trifling *Penance*, and upon a few words of *Abſolution* he ſhall preſently be dubbed a true *Penitent*, and be as effectually inſtated in the *Favour* of God as if he had brought forth all the Fruits of *Repentance*. And this *Bellarmine* tells us is the current Judgment of all their *Divines*; which if it be true, poor *Judas* had very ill luck to be damned; for according to *this* Doctrine he was throughly diſpoſed for *Juſtification*, it being out of mere *Attrition* that he hanged himſelf; ſo that had he had but a *Prieſt* to have adminiſtered *Penance* and *Abſolution* to him, that *Grace* that made him *hang* himſelf, would have intitled him to *Heaven*. 'Tis true indeed they tell us that there is a certain *Penance* which Men muſt undergo for their ſins in *this Life* and that if they ſhould not *perform* what is impoſed upon them, or if what is impoſed ſhould not be *ſufficient* to ſatisfy Gods Juſtice, they muſt be forced to *make it up* by their Sufferings in *Purgatory*. But even againſt *this* too that

Church

Church hath contrived an excellent *Remedy*, and that is the *Treaſury* of the ſuperabundant *Merits* of *Chriſt* and the *Saints*, of which at very reaſonable Rates Men may *purchaſe* ſuch a ſhare, as will immediately pay off all their *Purgatory* ſcores, how *great* ſoever their preſent *Sins*, and how *ſmall* ſoever their preſent *Penances* are. For out of this *Treaſury* of *Merit* you may have *Indulgence* for a *Hundred*, a *Thouſand*, or a *Hundred Thouſand* Years; and if this will not ſatisfy, you may beſides this have *full* Indulgence, *fuller* Indulgence and *fulleſt* Indulgence, and 'tis impoſſible you ſhould ever want *Merit* to keep your *Soul* out of *Purgatory*, if you have but *Money* and *Hearts* to pay for it. But if you ſhould ſtill be doubtful, you may *ſecure* all, if you pleaſe, by liſting your ſelf into an holy *Confraternity*; for if you will but turn *Brother of St. Francis his Cord*, you ſhall preſently be intitled to ſuch a ſtock of *Indulgencies* as all the *Sins* you can commit will never be able to *out-ſpend*. For at your firſt putting on this *ſacred Implement*, you have as *full* and as *effectual* Pardon as was ever vouchſafed in the *Sacrament* of *Baptiſm*. And afterwards ſhould you fall into *mortal* Sin, 'tis but taking ſo much Pains as to walk after the monthly *Proceſſion*, and you ſhall have a plenary *Indulgence* which ſhall attend your *holy Cord* to the very Ar-

ticle of your *Death*. Beſides which, you ſhall have your ſhare in all the ſuperabundant *Merits* of the *Saints*, of the *Order* of Saint *Roſes*, and Saint *Clara's* and Saint *Francis himſelf*, who by preaching to *Beaſts* and teaching *Larks* and *Swallows* their *Chatechiſm*, and ſilly *Sheep* to bleat out their *Canonical Hours*, with ſundry other ſuch like holy *Feats*, could not fail to treaſure up a vaſt ſtock of *Merits* in the common *Bank* of his *Fraternity*. Or if you would be ſurer yet, you may enter your ſelf a *Brother* of the holy *Fraternity* of the 150 Beads of St. *Dominick*, where, for ſaying over 150 *Ave Maries* and 15 *Pater Noſters* in a week, you ſhall not only be allowed your *Dividend* of the ſuperabundant *Merits* of all the Saints from *Adam*, and as many *Indulgencies* as you can poſſibly have occaſion for your *ſelf*; but ſuch an overplus as will be ſufficient to redeem 115 *Souls* yearly out of *Purgatory*. And it would be a very hard caſe if with all this *tackle* you ſhould go to *Purgatory* your ſelf. But if the worſt come to the worſt, it is but inrolling your ſelf a *Brother* of St. *Simons Scapular*, and then if you ſhould go to *Purgatory*, the *Virgin Mary* hath ingaged her ſelf, if *Pope John* XXII. doth not foully bely her, to come down to *Purgatory* every *Saturday* night, and pull up every *Soul* thence that hath worn this ſacred *Veſtment* into the holy

holy hill of eternal Life. And when a *Fryars Cord*, or *Rochet*, or *String* of *Beads* are ſuch excellent *tools* for Men to *work* out their *Salvation* with, what need they trouble themſelves to bring forth the *Fruits* of *Repentance*? had theſe things been only the Conceits of ſome *particular* Members of that *Church* I ſhould not have mentioned them in this place, becauſe to us they cannot but look extreamly *ridiculous*; but alas they are *Cheats* that have been founded and eſtabliſhed on the *Bulls* of their *Popes*, avowed and contended for by their graveſt *Doctors*, and reverenced and believed by the *devouteſt Members* of their *Communion*. And how can they be obliged to bring forth the *Fruits* of *Repentance*, who are furniſhed with ſo many pretty Devices to get to *Heaven* without them?

3. And laſtly, Hence therefore let us all be perſuaded *heartily* to comply with this *Injunction*, and *bring forth* the natural *Fruits* of *Repentance*; firſt to form a *hearty* and *deliberate Reſolution* againſt our Sins, and then to put it into *Execution* by forſaking all *ungodlineſs* and *worldly luſts*, and living *ſoberly* and *righteouſly* and *godly* in this preſent World. I do not deny but in this undertaking there are many times very great *Difficulties*, eſpecially when we firſt *enter* upon it, when after a long *Courſe* of *Folly*

we

we *begin* to reform; for *then* we muſt *wreſtle* againſt our own Inclinations and *ſtruggle* with inveterate Habits; and this perhaps will put us to a greater tryal of our *Courage* and *Conſtancy* than we are now aware of. But if upon a due conſideration of the Arguments on both ſides we can but once perſuade our ſelves to a through *Reſolution* of *Amendment*, in all probability we have broke the *heart* of the *main* Difficulty of *Repentance*. It is I confeſs a *hard* thing for a Man to perſuade himſelf againſt all his *Habits* and *Inclinations*, to reſolve without any reſerve in *Cold* and *Deliberate* thoughts upon an univerſal *Reformation*, at once to reſolve to bid *adieu* forever to all his *darling* Luſts and their appendant *Pleaſures*. This, as our *Saviour* deſcribes it, is like the *cutting off of a right Hand* and the *plucking out of a right Eye*; and therefore muſt doubtleſs be attended with vehement *Struglings* and *Reluctances*; but when this is done, the *ſharpeſt Pang* of our *Repentance* is over; and if *now* we do not *wilfully* miſcarry, theſe our bitter *Throws* like the *Virgin Mother*'s, will ſoon conclude in *Songs* and *Magnificats*. For by arming a *firm Reſolution* againſt them, we have already broken the *main* ſtrength of our *Luſts*, ſo that now we have nothing to do but to *purſue* our *Victory*; and if we have but the *Courage* to keep the ground we have *gotten*, and to

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ſtand *firm* to our *Reſolution* that ſo our conquered *Foe* may not be able to *rally* and *reinforce* himſelf againſt us; we ſhall ſoon be crowned with the Joys of a *Victory* that will lead us into an *everlaſting Triumph*. For our evil *Habits*, being for a while kept under a *conſtant* and *ſevere* Reſtraint, will by degrees *decay* and *languiſh*, and at laſt *expire*; and then the Trouble of *contending* will be over, and all our conſequent *Religion* will be *Sweet*, and *Natural*, and *Eaſie*; and we ſhall reap far more *Pleaſure* and *Delight* from it than ever we did from the moſt *jolly* Courſe of *Sinning*. For beſides that a *Religious* Life is in it ſelf more agreeable to our *rational Faculties*, and conſequently more grateful unto *Humane Natnre*, whoſe *nobleſt Pleaſures* do reſult from the Exerciſe of her *higheſt Faculties*, and whoſe *higheſt Faculties* are never ſo vigorouſly exerciſed as within the ſphere of a *Religious Life*: Beſides which I ſay we ſhall therein find an unſpeakable Satisfaction of *Mind*, and ſuch a Calm of *Conſcience*, and ſuch raviſhing *Joys* and *Delights* ſpringing out of our ſenſe of the *Love of God* and our Hopes of a bleſſed *Immortality* hereafter, as will *abundantly* compenſate all our *Labours* paſt, and render them not only *tolerable* but *delightſom*. For how can I think any Pains *intolerable*, the Endurance whereof will create a *conſtant* Harmony *within* me,

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will Crown me with the *Applauſe* of my *own* Mind, will indear me to the *Fountain* of all *Love* and *Goodneſs*, and entertain me with the Hopes of being as *happy* after a few moments as all the Joys of an *everlaſting Heaven* can make me? But I beſeech you to conſider, is it not much eaſier to indure the *Agonies* of a bitter *Repentance*, than the horrid *Deſpair* of a *damned Ghoſt*? to thwart a fooliſh and unreaſonable *Luſt*, than to roar forever upon the Rack of a ſelf-condemning *Conſcience*? if it be ſo *grievous* to us to contend with an evil *habit* and ſtruggle a while with a ſtiff and obſtinate *Inclination*, to reſolve and ſtrive and watch and pray againſt them, *Lord*, how *grievous* will it be to *dwell with everlaſting Burnings*, and to endure the *dire* Effects of thy unquenchable *Fury* forever? and yet *one* of theſe muſt certainly be endured, for between them there is no *medium*. Wherefore ſeeing we are under ſuch an *abſolute* Neceſſity of enduring *Hell* or the Difficulties of *Repentance*, in the Name of God let us but *act like Men*, and of the *two* chuſe that which is moſt *tolerable*, and then I am ſure we ſhall follow the counſel of the Text, and *bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance*.

MATTH.

MATTHEW XXV. 10. laſt part.

And the Door was ſhut.

THESE Words are the cloſe of the *Parable* of the *ten-Virgins*, whom our *Saviour* diſtributes into five *Wiſe* and five *Fooliſh*, and by them he repreſents the *different* Carriage and Fate of Men both *good* and *bad*. For the better underſtanding of which *Parable* you muſt know that our *Saviour* borrowed this, as well as ſundry others, from the *Jewiſh Doctors*, of which our learned *Sheringham* in his Preface of his Tranſlation of the *Joma* hath given us ſundry Inſtances; of which this is one, which to this purpoſe he tranſcribes out of the *Gemara Babylonica*; *Rab. Eliezer ſaid, be ſure thou repent the day before thou dieſt.* Upon which his *Diſciples* asked him whether a Man might know that hour of his death; whereunto he anſwers *let a Man therefore repent every day, becauſe he knows not when he ſhall die.* Upon which *Rab. Jochanan* propoſes this *Parable*; a certain rich man prepared a *Marriage Feaſt*, to which he called his Servants, but did not tell them the diſtinct time when this *Feaſt* ſhould be: of theſe Servants ſome were *wiſe*, and

and ſome *fooliſh*; the *wiſe* cloathed themſelves ſplendidly, and ſitting before their Maſters houſe thus thought with themſelves, all things are here prepared, and nothing is wanting; wherefore ſince we are *uncertain* what hour we ſhall be called, we will *wait*, that ſo whenſoever he calls us, we may be ready to attend. But the *fooliſh* ſleepy Servants loitered away their time, concluding thus with themſelves; we need not be *over-haſty* in making our ſelves *ready* it being yet a great while before we are like to be called. But on a ſuddain the *Maſter* calls them all to the *Supper*; upon which the *Wiſe* appeared before him *ready* to attend, but the *Fooliſh* being *unready* would fain have gone away to *dreſs* themſelves: but the *King* rejoycing for thoſe who were *ready*, and being very angry with thoſe that *ſlept*, ſaid, you who are *ready* ſhall ſit down, and Eat and Drink and Rejoyce; whilſt you that *ſlept* ſhall be ſhut out of Door; for ſo ſaith the *Lord*, behold my *Servants* ſhall eat, but *you* ſhall hunger, my *Servants* ſhall drink, but *you* ſhall thirſt. This is the *Jewiſh Parable*, which for ſubſtance being ſo exactly agreeable with our *Saviours*, we may very reaſonably conclude that his was only a *Copy* of that *Original*; and ſince the *Deſign* of it is evidently to ſhew the Danger of *delaying* Repentance to the laſt, we may fairly ſuppoſe

poſe the *Deſign* of our *Saviour* to be ſo *too*. For by the *Wiſe* and *Fooliſh* Virgins here, our *Saviour* plainly means *good* and *bad* Chriſtians, and by the *Marriage feaſt*, that ſtate of *Happineſs* which he hath prepared for the *good*. By their going forth to meet the *Bridegroom* is meant their expectation of Chriſts *Coming*, either to their *particular*, or to the *general* Judgment. By their *Lamps* in their hands *Expoſitors* generally underſtand their *viſible* profeſſion of *Chriſtanity*. By the *Oil* that made thoſe *Lamps* to ſhine, is meant Charity and good Works, which are the *Fruits* of a *ſincere* Repentance, and the glory and luſtre of our *Chriſtian* Profeſſion. And as for the *Wiſe* who by *ſincere* Repentance had prepared themſelves for this *feaſt* of heavenly *Happineſs*, they are admitted into it; but as for the *Fooliſh* that had put off all to the laſt, though they beſtirr'd themſelves very vigorouſly in this *ſad* Extremity, yet all was to no purpoſe; for when they came to ask admittance into *Heaven*, the Door was ſhut againſt them, and they are diſmiſſed with this bitter *farewel*, *Verily I ſay unto you, I know you not*. So that the Deſign of the *Words* is plainly to repreſent the ſad *Cataſtrophe* of a *late* Repentance, which tho' it may be very active and vigorous when things are reduced to the *laſt* extremity, yet proves moſt commonly ineffectu-

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al, and finds the *Door* of *Heaven* ſhut againſt it.

That therefore which I deſign from theſe Words is this, to explain and ſtate what is the Effect of a *Death-bed* Repentance, by which I mean ſuch a *Repentance* as after a long Courſe of *Wickedneſs* begins upon the very near and ſenſible Approach, either of a *natural* or *violent* Death, ſuch as is put off till Death is at the Door, and Men perceive themſelves to be departing hence, and going away into *Eternity*. For as for that Repentance which is begun in *Health*, when Death is not in view, and Men are in the midſt of *Temptations* to the contrary, it is much more free and ingenuous than that of a *Death-bed* can be ſuppoſed; and conſequently though it ſhould be ſtopped in its progreſs by a *ſudden* unexpected Death, yet there is much more hope of it: and that which begins alſo in a *long lingring Sickneſs*, though it be not ſo free as the former, and therefore not ſo hopeful, yet is there much more hope of it than of that which begins in more *acute* Diſeaſes, to which Death more ſuddenly follows; becauſe it hath much more time to grow in, and to finiſh and compleat it ſelf by. That *late* or *Death-bed* Repentance therefore concerning which we are now inquiring, muſt be ſuch a Repentance as begins in the proſpect of a *near-approaching*

approaching Death, and to which that Death doth very ſuddenly follow. Concerning which I ſhall enquire theſe three things.

1. How far it is poſſible for ſuch a Repentance to be *effectual.*

2. How extreamly *hazardous* it is whether it ever *actually* prove *effectual* to our *Happineſs* or no.

3. If it ſhould prove ſo, yet how impoſſible it is in an *ordinary* way for us to attain any comfortable *Aſſurance* of it.

1. How far it is poſſible for ſuch a Repentance to be *effectual.* And here I dare not pronounce it to be *abſolutely* and *univerſally* Ineffectual, though I confeſs I am horribly afraid that it very rarely proves otherwiſe. For the Repentance on which *Salvation* is entailed neceſſarily includes a through *Change* of *Soul,* that is, a *new* prevailing *Judgment* and *Reſolution*; and for certain whereſoever this really is there is *true* Repentance. For the very Life of Repentance conſiſts in the univerſal *Subjection* of our *Souls* to God, and this *Subjection* conſiſts in ſuch a firm *Reſolution* of *Soul* to obey him, as, whenſoever occaſion is offered, will render us *actually obedient.* I know there are ſome who place this *Subjection* of our *Souls* to God in an univerſal *Habit* of *Obedience,* but ſurely they do not conſider that an *Habit* of *Obedience,* which conſiſts in an *inherent* Aptneſs

neſs and Facility of obeying, is not attainable under a long progreſs in *Religion*, and that in our firſt Entrance into the *religious State* we are ſo far from being *habituated* to obey God, that we generally obey with a greatdeal of *Difficulty*; and while we do ſo, 'tis a Contradiction to ſay that we are *habituated* to Obedience. So that by placing the *Souls* Subjection to God in ſuch a *Habit*, we undermine the Comfort of all *Beginners* in *Religion*, and exclude all thoſe from being faithful *Servants* who have not conquered the *Difficulties* of obeying. And therefore I think it much more ſafe to place our firſt *Subjection* to God in a *hearty* Reſolution of obeying; for as *Choice* and *Reſolution* is the principle of all our *voluntary* Actions, ſo it is of our *Subjection* to God; which being a *moral* Action muſt be voluntary, and ſo begin in *Choice* or *Reſolution*, from whence if it hath opportunity it will proceed into *Action*, and that being often repeated will gradually improve into an *Habit*, and ſo in time render it *natural* and *eaſie* to us. But if Death ſhould intervene and deprive the Man who is thus ſincerely *reſolved* on all opportunities of *actual* Obedience, that being accidental makes no change in his *main* State, the *Frame* and *Temper* of his *Soul* remains the ſame, it goes into *Eternity* a faithful *Subject* to God, and had it continued longer here

here would have expreſſed its *Subjection* in all the neceſſary Acts of *Homage* and *Obedience*. And far be it from us to imagine the condition of ſuch a *Soul* to be deſperate, for though it is true that a *holy* Life is the indiſpenſable Condition of *Salvation*, yet it is alſo true that a *holy* Life is neceſſarily included in this *Subjection* of our *Souls* to God. That Man doth live a *holy* Life who ſincerely ſubmits his *Soul* to God, and is firmly reſolved, as occaſion offers, to expreſs his *ſubmiſſion* in all the *external* Acts of *Homage* and *Obedience*. 'Tis true the *Death-bed* Penitent hath not opportunity to exerciſe himſelf in all the parts of *Obedience*; he cannot practiſe *Chaſtity* and *Temperance*, nor any other *Vertue*, to whoſe contrary *Vice* his *Sickneſs* hath utterly diſabled him; but what of that? neither hath the *healthful* Penitent always opportunity to practiſe every *Vertue* which God injoyns: If he be *poor* or *ſingle*, he can no more give *Alms*, or provide for his *Children*, than the *ſick Man* can be *chaſte* or *temperate*, and yet he lives a *holy* Life, I hope, though he hath no occaſion or opportunity to practiſe either of theſe Duties. Why then may not the *ſick* Penitent that practiſes his *Duty* ſo far as he hath opportunity, that heartily mourns for his *ſin*, and patiently ſubmits to Gods correction, that practiſes *Humility* and *Devotion*, is *charitable*

in forgiving Offences, *juſt* in making *Reſtitution* for Injuries; why may not ſuch a one be as well ſaid to live a *holy* Life, when he doth all this out of a hearty *Subjection* of his *Soul* to God, though he ſhould have no opportunity to practiſe ſome other *Vertues*. For he who is ſincerely reſolved to ſubmit to the *Laws* of *Temperance* and *Chaſtity*, is chaſt and temperate though he never have opportunity to practiſe them, and all the difference between him and one that lives to practiſe what he reſolves is only this, that the *latter* will practiſe it, and the *former* would; and in Gods account, who ſees the *Iſſues* of all our *Reſolutions*, he is as really *temperate* who would be ſo if he had opportunity, as he who is ſo when he hath: ſo that though *his* Repentance be not ſtrictly the ſame with the *others*, yet it being to the ſame purpoſe, we cannot imagine that the good God will *damn* him only for a *punctilio*. If therefore it be poſſible for the *Death-bed* Penitent to reduce himſelf to a firm, prevailing *Reſolution* of obeying God, I ſee no reaſon to conclude his *Condition* to be *abſolutely* deſperate; for being ſo reſolved, he is a holy Man, though very imperfectly I confeſs; and if he go into *Eternity* with that *Reſolution* with him, that will diſpoſe him for ſome degree of *Happineſs*. For if his *Reſolution* be ſuch as would have prevail-

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ed if he had continued in *this* Life, it will as well prevail in the *other*; and if it ſo prevail there as to render him actually obedient, it will be neceſſary conſequence render him in ſome meaſure a *happy* and *bleſſed Spirit*; Obedience to God being as natural a Cauſe of *Happineſs*, as the *Sun* is of *Light*, or the *Fire* of *Heat* and *Burning*. All the Difficulty therefore is this, not whether God will accept of ſuch a *Reſolution*, as whether a *Death-bed* Repentance can be ſo far improved as to riſe to ſuch a *Reſolution*. And here I muſt needs confeſs, and ſhall hereafter make it evident, that the Difficulty of perfecting ſuch a Repentance into ſuch a Reſolution is ſo exceeding great, that it is the greateſt *madneſs* in the World for any Man to promiſe himſelf *ſucceſs* before hand whilſt he is in *Health*, and hath ſo many better opportunities of Repentance in his hand. But that it is abſolutely impoſſible I dare not ſay for theſe following Reaſons:

1. Becauſe *de facto* we ſometimes find that the *Reſolutions* of a *ſick Bed* have proved effectual. We know there have been ſome Men who in a *Fit* of *Sickneſs* when they have looked on themſelves as *abandoned* of all Hopes, have yet betaken themſelves to *ſerious* Reſolutions, which when they have recovered to their former *Health*, have viſibly proved effectual. I confeſs theſe *Sick-*

bed Reſolutions do moſt commonly *die* when the Man recovers, and he uſually leaves his *Bed* and his *good* Purpoſes together; but ſince there are ſome Inſtances wherein they have held and proved effectual, that is ſufficient to *demonſtrate* the Poſſibility of the Thing: for what hath been, may be; and what Reaſon can be given why *ſome* Men may not perform in *Eternity* what they promiſed on their *Death-beds*, as well as *others* do after their Recovery what they promiſed on their *Sick-beds*? As therefore the *Relapſe* of moſt Men from their *Sick-bed* Purpoſes proves it extreamly hard, ſo the Continuance of others ſtedfaſt to them proves it poſſible for ſuch Purpoſes to be ſincere.

2. Another thing that proves it poſſible is this, that upon a *Death-bed* oft times the *Arguments* of Repentance have a more immediate Acceſs to the *Minds* of Men than at any other time, and conſequently may be well ſuppoſed to be much more effectual and operative. Now the *Promiſes* and *Threats* of *Religion* will ſtrike more immediately on the *Soul*, the *Goods* and *Evils* which they propoſe and denounce being nearer at hand, and the *Soul* perceiving her ſelf within a *moment* of enjoying the one or ſuffering the other for ever; and that thick Fog of *earthly* Cares and Pleaſures that interrupted her Proſpect into the *other* World being in a great

great meaſure diſpelled and ſcattered, ſhe lies more open and uncovered to the Things of *Eternity:* and therefore as one thing ſtrikes upon another with a *natural Effect*, as *Light* ſtrikes upon the *Eye*, and *Sounds* upon the *Ear*; ſo *eternal* Things do upon *immortal* Spirits when there is nothing between to intercept the Stroke, and make moſt deep and vigorous Impreſſions on them. And when *Heaven* and *Hell* are ſo near the *Soul* that ſhe expects almoſt every *moment* to expire into the *one* or the *other*, who can tell what ſtrange and ſudden Alterations they may make in her *Temper* and *Reſolutions?* So that though I muſt confeſs it is a *ſtupendous* Effect for a *Soul* to be changed in the ſhort *Twinkling* of a *Death-bed* Repentance, yet when I conſider the mighty *Influence* which the Arguments of *Religion* may then be reaſonably ſuppoſed to have upon her, I dare not ſay 'tis *abſolutely* impoſſible; eſpecially conſidering,

3. And laſtly, That how impoſſible ſoever it may be to *humane* Power, yet 'tis not impoſſible to the *Grace* of God. 'Tis true indeed, God ordinarily vouchſafes his Grace to Men proportionably to their Improvement of it; and I confeſs if he proceeds by this Rule with the *dying* Penitent, he hath leſs Reaſon to expect God's Grace now than in any former *Period* of his Life. But yet

we ſee the Grace of God doth not always proceed by *ſtated* Rules and Proportions, for ſometimes God hath given the *largeſt* Meaſures of his Grace to thoſe who have made the *leaſt* Improvements of it: ſometimes very *great* Sinners have been ſtopped in their *wicked* Courſes when they leaſt expected it, and turned back by a Grace that was almoſt *irreſiſtible*; and tho' this be more ordinary than other Miracles are, ſo that Men may as reaſonably *immure* themſelves, and depend upon God to feed them by Miracle, as *put* off their Repentance to the laſt in expectation of having their *Souls* renewed and changed by ſuch a miraculous Grace; yet who knows but when the poor *dying* Penitent, under the mighty *Hopes* and *Fears* of *Eternity*, is ſtrugling might and main for his *Soul*, to reſcue it from *endleſs* Miſery; who knows, I ſay, but the *good* God may ſometimes, and in ſome *peculiar* Caſes, take pity upon him, and by a more than ordinary Grace concur with his *Endeavours*, and render them ſucceſsful. 'Tis, I confeſs, a *ſad* State when Things are brought to this Extremity that he has nothing but *this* to depend on; but yet ſince the Grace of God is not confined to do *thus* or *thus*, and no otherwiſe; but may, when it pleaſes, tranſgreſs the ordinary *Methods* of its Procedure, I dare not pronounce the State of thoſe

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Death-bed Penitents wholly *deſperate*, who heartily implore the *divine* Aſſiſtance, and exert their utmoſt Strength, and uſe all means within their Power to *change* the *wicked* Temper of their minds. For God may hear and pity them if he pleaſe, and if he will, there is no doubt but his own Grace *concurring* with their Endeavours can produce this *happy* Effect how great and difficult ſoever it may be. All that can be ſaid therefore in the Caſe is this, that an *internal* Change of *Soul* from a State of Diſobedience to a State of *univerſal* Subjection to God, is *indiſpenſibly* neceſſary to *Salvation*; that ſuch a *Change* is poſſible to the *Death-bed* Penitent, and ſo conſequently is the *Salvation* which depends upon it. But alas, 'tis *barely* poſſible, *ſo* barely poſſible, that while I am in my Wits I think I ſhould hardly venture on it for a *thouſand* Worlds. Which brings me to

2. The next Thing propoſed, which was to ſhew you how fearfully *hazardous* it is, whether a Man that *begins* his Religion on his *Death-bed* can actually arrive to that degree of *Repentance* as is neceſſary to his *future* Happineſs. And this will plainly appear if we conſider,

1. The great *Difficulty* of the thing it ſelf.
2. The *Impotency* and *Indiſpoſition* of him that is to perform it.

3. The

3. The *little* Reaſon he hath to expect any extraordinary *Aid* and *Aſſiſtance* from God.

1. It is extreamly *hazardous*, becauſe of the great *Difficulty* of the Thing it ſelf. We find by Experience, that after a long Courſe of Sin, 'tis one of the moſt *difficult* Things in the World for a Man to reduce himſelf to a *thorough* Reſolution of Amendment; for Cuſtom of ſinning begets *ſinful* Habits, and *ſinful* Habits are a *ſecond* Nature to us. So that for a Man to reſolve upon a holy Life after he hath been long *habituated* to the contrary, is to reſolve to make War with himſelf, and to live in *open* Hoſtility with the *Inclinations* of his own Nature; and thus to reſolve againſt the *Grain*, and *incline* himſelf againſt his own Inclinations, is one of the greateſt Acts of *Violence* that a Man can offer to himſelf. 'Tis true, in a ſudden *Heat* and *Tranſport* it is an eaſie matter for a Man to reſolve upon any thing when he is in a *Pet* againſt his *Sins*, or his Mind is *chafed* into a *religious* Temper; but, alas! theſe *inconſiderate* Purpoſes are generally the greateſt *Cheats* in the World, for they rarely, if ever, work any *Alteration* in the *Soul*; for though now the Man be in a *Pet* againſt his *Sins*, yet his Judgment of them is the ſame, and that is the Principle of his *ſtanding* Reſolutions. Men are often

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angry with their beſt Friends, and while the Paſſion continues, they can eaſily reſolve to diſcard them for ever; but notwithſtanding they do ſo, yet they are Friends ſtill, and love them heartily, though at preſent they do not *perceive* it: and as ſoon as their Paſſion is over, their Love will return, and immediately *cancel* all their Reſolutions againſt them. And ſo it is with theſe *paſſionate* Reſolutions Men make againſt their *Sins*, which work no Change at all in the ſtanding *Temper* and *Diſpoſition* of their *Souls* and are ſo far from curing them, that they are only the *Intermiſſions* of their Diſeaſe; and though at preſent they are *angry* with their Sins, and do purpoſe never to be *reconciled* to them more, yet ſtill they love them heartily though they perceive it not, and as ſoon as their Paſſion is over, their Love returns and reverſes their Purpoſe; and ſo theſe Fallings out of Lovers end in the *Renovation* of Love: ſo that theſe *raſh* and *haſty* Reſolutions are ſo far from being *hearty* Submiſſions unto God, that they only make a *Truce* with him to fetch Breath and *recruit* for a farther *Rebellion*. And thus to reſolve, is, I confeſs, the eaſieſt thing in the World; but for an *old* Sinner to enter into a *ſerious* Reſolution of Amendment in the midſt of *cool* and *deliberate* Thoughts, when his *Sins* are about him entertaining him with the *freſh* Remembrances

brance of thoſe *dear* Pleaſures they were wont to invite him to; when he is, or ſuppoſes himſelf to be *invironed* with Temptation, and importuned on every ſide with all thoſe *ſoft* Allurements that are ſo ſweet and grateful to him; this, doubtleſs, is ſuch a Task as will exact his utmoſt *Induſtry* and *Conſideration*. For now he will meet with ſuch *Oppoſitions* from his Appetites, ſuch *Shrinkings* and *Recoilings* from his Will, ſuch *Struglings* and *Pulbacks* from his *darling* Luſts, as will even diſtract his *Soul*, and interpoſe a thouſand Impediments to hinder him from coming to a *thorough* Reſolution. So that unleſs he be *armed* with *great* Conſideration, *animated* with *invincible* Courage, and *aided* by a *mighty* Grace, after all his *Deliberation* he will either not reſolve at all, or, which is almoſt as bad, reſolve with Reſerves and Exceptions. Since therefore to form a *hearty* and *thorough* Reſolution of Amendment is ſo extreamly hard and difficult, what a *fearful* Hazard muſt that Man run that remits it to a *dying* Hour. For how can we hope to accompliſh ſo *great* a Work in ſo *ſhort* a Time? when we *croud* up a Duty of ſo *vaſt* a Bulk, in ſo *narrow* a Room, in how much Danger muſt it be of being *ſtrangled* in the Birth for want of Time and Air to *breath* in? I dare not ſay it is abſolutely impoſſible in ſo ſhort a Time to make a

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thorough Change in our Temper and Reſolution; but ſure I am it is ſo extreamly difficult, that 'tis the greateſt *Hazard* in the World whether we actually perform it, eſpecially conſidering.

2. The great *Impotency* and *Indiſpoſition* of *Death-bed* Penitents to perform it. By what hath been ſaid of the Difficulty of it, you plainly perceive that to the Performance of it there is required *vaſt* Induſtry, *great* Conſideration, and *earneſt* Strivings and Conteſts with our ſelves; but alas! how unable and unfit is a Man for theſe things when he lies languiſhing on a *Death-bed*? when commonly the ſickneſs he languiſhes under is either ſuch as wholly *diſables*, or extreamly *weakens* and *impairs* his Reaſon; ſo that either he is wholly incapable of ſuch Reflections and Conſiderations as are neceſſary to a *thorough* Reſolution of Amendment, or at leaſt is very unfit for them. Now in this ſad Extreamity what can the *poor* Wretch do? His *ſinful* Soul ſits *drowzing* on the very *Brinks* of a diſmal *Eternity*, and *Deaths* cold hand is thruſting it *headlong* down; ſo that if *She* doth not preſently *rouze* and *ſtart* up and *run* away from her Danger, within a very few *moments* ſhe will awake in *everlaſting* Flames. But alas! how ſhould *ſhe rouze* her ſelf out of thoſe *fatal* Slumbers when ſhe hath ſcarce Reaſon enough to reflect upon her

her Danger or to take any Notice of that *fearful* Precipice before her; when by the diſtemper of her *bodily* Organs *She* is ſo *ſtund* and *ſtupified* that ſhe can neither diſcern where *She* is, nor whither *She* is going? But ſuppoſe his Sickneſs be ſuch as leaves him the free Uſe of his Reaſon, yet conſidering how much he muſt needs be diſtracted by *Pain* and *Uneaſineſs*, by *Weakneſs* and *Languiſhment*, by the *Cares* of ſetling his Affairs in *this* World, and the *frightful* Proſpect that he hath of *another*, it will be impoſſible for him, without a mighty Aſſiſtance from above, to *range* his *ſcattered* and *unweildy* Thoughts into ſuch *ſober* Reflections and *ſerious* Conſiderations as are neceſſary to the forming of a *thorough* Reſolution of Amendment; for ſuch a Reſolution can never be formed in a *hurry* of Paſſion, but muſt be the Reſult of *calm* and *compoſed* Deliberations. For, as I ſhewed you before, haſty and paſſionate Reſolutions work no *Change* upon the Soul, and till a Man hath made a *new* Judgment of Things, it will be in vain for him to make any *new* Reſolutions; becauſe 'tis impoſſible that any Reſolution ſhould be laſting that is not founded in the Judgment. But what Capacity can a Man be in to make a *new* Judgment of Things in the midſt of the *inceſſant* Hurries and Diſtractions of a *Death-bed*, when he cannot conſider

conſider a quarter of an hour together, but is interrupted almoſt every *moment* by a thouſand Accidents and Avocations? So that to refer our Repentance to a *Death-bed* is the ſame thing as to retire into a *Battle* to meditate, or to ſet up a *Cloſet* to ſtudy *Philoſophy* in the *Head Quarters* of an Army, where a Man is as capable of free and undiſturbed *Contemplations* as Men uſually are of forming *thorough* Reſolutions of Amendment when they are a dying; which, without an *extraordinary* Aſſiſtance from God, being utterly impoſſible, muſt needs be extreamly *hazardous*; conſidering,

3. And laſtly, the little Reaſon ſuch a Man hath to expect any *extraordinary* Aſſiſtance from God. When a Man hath ſlighted all Gods *Invitations* to Repentance, and wilfully turned a *deaf* Ear to all the *ſecret* Whiſpers and Importunities of his *bleſſed* Spirit, when he hath all his Life-time rejected the Motions and Tenders of his *Grace* upon this reſolution that he would ſin on as long as he was able, and never repent till he could ſin no longer; with what confidence can he expect that God ſhould *vouchſafe* him in his dying Hour that *extraordinary* Grace which he ſtands in need of, and without which he muſt dye *forever*? For when a Man hath been mocking God all his Life with the Promiſes of a *future* Repentance,

tance, but from time to time hath ſtill delayed and deferred it till he hath driven it to the *laſt* Extremity, ſo that now he muſt repent, or be *damned* prehaps the next *Moment*; with what face can he implore ſuch an *extraordinary* Favour from that God with whom he hath ſo wretchedly prevaricated? For unleſs we ſuppoſe God to be a Being that loves to be provoked, one that is taken with *Affronts* and *Injuries*, and conſequently that meaſures his Favours to us by the degrees and number of our *Rebellions* againſt him; we cannot reaſonably expect that he ſhould be then moſt kind to us when we have offended him as much as we are able, and would never be perſuaded to repent of our Wickedneſs till we were able to offend him no more. I deſire to have as large Apprehenſions of the *Mercy* of God as can be reaſonably admitted, but withal I am aſſured he is the hardeſt to be impoſed upon of any one in the World; and being ſo, it cannot well be expected that when in deſpite of his Authority and *frequent* Invitations to Repentance, the *Sinner* hath *ſquandred* away all his *Strength* and *Vigour* in a Courſe of Wickedneſs, God ſhould be ſo indulgent to him on his *Death-bed* as to ſupply that Strength which he hath ſpent in ſinning againſt him by the *extraordinary* Aſſiſtances of his own Grace; eſpecially conſidering how

how often he hath declared his Reſolution of *diſpenſing* his Grace to us in *greater* or *leſſer* Proportions according to the improvements we make of it. So *James* iv. 6, 7, 8. *For the Scripture offereth more Grace; and therefore ſaith, God reſiſteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. Submit your ſelves therefore unto God; reſiſt the Devil, and he will fly from you; draw near unto God, and he will draw near unto you.* And thus more expreſly in the *Parable* of the *Talents*, *Matt.* xxv. 29. *For unto every one that hath*, that is, improves what he hath, *ſhall be given, and he ſhall have abundance; but from him that hath not, i.e.* improves not what he hath, *ſhall be taken away, even that which he hath.* God therefore having thus declared that he will *leſſen* or *augment* his Grace proportionably as we abuſe or improve it, we may reaſonably expect that the oftener we do repulſe its Motions, the weaker will be its Attempts upon us, and ſo weaker and weaker till 'tis wholly with drawn, and hath given us up for *deſperate* and *irreclaimable*; and conſequently if God proceed in *this* Method, as doubtleſs he moſt ordinarily doth, then the longer a Man continues in ſin, the more he is *abandoned* of the Grace of God. So that when the Sinner is arrived to his *Death-bed*, he may reaſonably expect that if Gods Aſſiſtance be not wholly withdrawn and leſſen-

ed into nothing, as he may juſtly fear it will, yet it will be much leſs vigorous and powerful than in any *former Period* of his Life; and if it be, his Condition is next to deſperate; for if his Soul be not *renewed* and *changed*, within a *few* Moments it is ruined beyond all recovery. And ſince to effect this *Change* is a Work of *mighty* Difficulty, what but a *mighty* Grace can enable the *dying* Penitent in ſo *ſhort* a time and with ſo *ſmall* a Strength to perform it? So that the Summ of all is this, though the Condition of him that *remits* his Repentance to a *Death-bed* be not abſolutely *deſperate*, yet 'tis ſo fearfully *hazardous*, that nothing on this ſide *Hell* can be more wretched and deplorable; and therefore for Men to put off their Repentance to the laſt, and venture their Souls upon ſo great an *Uncertainty*, is a piece of the moſt *deſperate* Folly and Madneſs. I confeſs when a Man hath been ſo deſperate and cruel to himſelf as to run himſelf upon this *fearful* Venture, I would by no means diſcourage his Repentance, but rather uſe all *Means* to invite and perſuade him to it: for Repentance is always the beſt thing we can do, and when a Man hath been ſo deſperately *beſotted* as to defer it to a *Death-bed*, and put himſelf upon this *woful* Extremity, this is the *laſt* Remedy he can apply, and the *beſt* Refuge he hath to fly to. But ſo long

long as Men are well and in Health, and have a fair *ſpace* of Repentance in their hands, I would not for all the World encourage them to run ſuch a *deſperate* Hazard; for next to leaping headlong into *Hell* without any Repentance at all, doubtleſs the moſt *deſperate* Folly a Man can be guilty of is to defer his Repentance till he is dying. And ſo I paſs on to

3. The Third and laſt thing propoſed; which was, to ſhew you that ſuppoſing our *Death-bed* Penitent ſhould repent effectually, yet how impoſſible it is for him in an *ordinary* way to attain any *comfortable* Aſſurance of it. And indeed conſidering how many *Cheats* and *Frauds* there are under moſt of our Reſolutions of Amendment, it is at leaſt extreamly difficult for us to be any otherwiſe *ſecure* of them than by their Effects and Performances. As for the *dying* Penitent therefore that doth not long enough *ſurvive* his Reſolution to ſee the Execution of it, how can he be ſecure that it is ſincere and perfect, eſpecially conſidering that the *Circumſtances* in which he makes it are ſuch as do conſpire to render it extreamly ſuſpitious. For

1. He makes it under the *fear* of *Death.*
2. In the *Abſence* of Temptation.
3. Under a great *agony* of Conſcience.
4. In the *near* Neighbourhood of *Eternity.*

1. He makes his Reſolution under a *mighty* fear of Death, which gives him great reaſon to ſuſpect it. We daily ſee how much our Humours change and vary upon every Remove out of *one* Condition into *another*, and how theſe do caſt the *Ballance* of our *Superiour* Soul and make us every day ſo many *ſeveral ſorts* of Men. Every *Wind* almoſt turns our Minds towards a *new* point, and like *Water* we take the form of every *Veſſel* we are put into. So that we have great reaſon to ſuſpect that our *Death-bed* Repentance is not ſo much the *Mould* of our Minds, as of the *Condition* we are put into, and that were we poured back again into an *healthful* Condition, we ſhould immediately loſe our *preſent* Shape, and return into our *former* Figure again. For when Men ſee their Life is in Gods hand, and that he is ready to cut it in ſunder, it is no wonder at all if they do what they can to *bribe* him to ſpare them a little longer; and conſequently, if they reſolve *well*, and make *fair* Promiſes of *future* Obedience; which is the beſt thing they can do in this Extremity. But if their Reſolution be founded in the *Fear* of Death, its *Foundation* is contrary to its *Performance*, the *Motive* of their Reſolution to live well for the *future* being a preſumption that they ſhall live no *longer*; And it will be an Act of *Reaſon* and *Juſtice* to themſelves to *ſtick* to their

their reſolution, when the *Motive* of it is changed: and on the Contrary, of *Imprudence* and *Unkindneſs*, to forſake the *Concluſion*, when the *Premiſes* are conſulted. So that upon ſuch grounds as theſe what can be expected but that this *ſick* Reſolver will reſume his Sins with his Health if he ſhould recover, and leave his *new* Vows in *that* Bed where he firſt took them up, and diſcharge his *Fears* and his good *Actions*, his *Phyſician* and his *Confeſſor* together; it being ſo, how is it poſſible he ſhould be aſſured that his Reſolution is *ſincere* unleſs he recover and perform it?.

2. He makes his Reſolution in the Abſence of *Temptation*, which gives him alſo great reaſon to ſuſpect it. For now the *Seaſons* of the Pleaſures of Sin are over, he cannot *reliſh* their Delights becauſe his *cloyed* Appetite diſtaſtes them as the *full* Stomach doth the *Honey-comb*: and his Soul being now *unintereſted* in all *ſinful* Pleaſure, and being naturally in continual Motion, muſt neceſſarily divert the *Current* of its Action ſome other way; and the *future* State to which it is ſo *nearly* allied being all it hath to work upon, it is no wonder if the Freedom of its Motion turn *thitherwards*, being diverted out of its *old* Channel: for if he love his *Sins* or the *World* never ſo well, he muſt leave them whether he will or no: if he diſ-

like God and his *Holineſs* and an *everlaſting* Abode with him never ſo much, he is forced upon them, or *daſhed* upon *eternal* Miſery, which it is impoſſible for him to chuſe. So that now his good Reſolution is ſcarce an *Act* of *Choice*; for tho' he would not chuſe to obey God if he could ſtill *enjoy* his *former* Luſts, yet *they* being out of his reach, he muſt take what is to be had. So that 'tis mighty Suſpicious that the Senſe of his Reſolution is no more than this, *Holineſs* is good when a Man is juſt dying, but while he lives and can enjoy his Luſts, they are a great deal better; ſo that the Approach of Death makes *Holineſs* good to him upon this account only, becauſe there would be ſome thing *worſe*, and there can no longer be any thing *better*; and 'tis to be feared he eſteems it *good* only in compariſon with *Hell* which without it will inevitably follow. And when it thus purchaſes the reputation of being *good* from the *near* approach of ſuch a *mighty Evil*, it is not ſo much eſteemed a *Good* as a leſſer *Evil*; which argues that the Mans Judgment is not at all altered, for ſtill he looks on *Holineſs* as an *Evil*, and in chuſing it before *Hell*, he only chuſes of two *Evils* the leaſt, and 'tis extreamly Suſpicious that he would no more have choſen it *now* than he did while he was *Well* and in *Health*, but that it ſtands at preſent out

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of the Air of Temptation, and is preſented to him without the *Counterpoize* of thoſe ſinful Delights for whoſe ſake he formerly rejected it. For there are many *Apprehenſions* which make *deep* Impreſſions not only on our *Brain* and *Fanſies*, but on our *Affections* too, whilſt theſe are calm and unprovoked; which impreſſions notwithſtanding quickly vaniſh upon the ſtarting of *new* Objects, and the provocation of *contrary* Fanſies and Affections by them; ſo that it is impoſſible to be certain what thoſe *good* Reſolutions will come to which a Man makes when he hath no *Temptation* to the contrary. The utmoſt therefore that can be ſaid of them is this, they may be ſincere and they may hold out, but there is an *infinite* Hazard in them: they are eaſily made, becauſe at preſent there is no *Temptation* againſt them, no *vicious* Appetite ſtrong enough to controul them; but there is vaſt Reaſon to fear that ſhould the Man recover, and his *Appetites* return again upon him, the next *Temptation* would betray him and make him *ſurrender* up all his Reſolution; and conſequently if he die before he hath made a Trial of himſelf, his *Condition muſt* needs be extreamly uncertain, his *Hope* muſt ſit upon the Brinks of *Deſpair*, and his *Soul* go trembling into *Eternity* to think what a *Hazard* it is now a running.

3. He reſolves under the *Horrors* and *Agonies* of an *awakened* Conſcience, and this alſo renders his Reſolution extreamly Suſpicious. And indeed that Man muſt be in a *dead* Sleep that will not *awake* when *Death* is ſounding the *Trumpet* of *Judgment* in his Ears, and calling him inſtantly away to give up his *unprepared* Accounts. For though when *Judgment* ſeems to us at the other end of *Heaven* all is quiet, yet certainly when *Death* brings us to the very *Seat* of it, the *Awe* of that *dreadful* Tribunal of which we are now in ſight, and the *Senſe* of ſo many *Guilts* ſtaring us in the face, of which we muſt the next *Moment* acquit our ſelves, or Die for ever, muſt neceſſarily ſhake our *ſleepy* Conſciences into *unſpeakable* Horrors and Agonies, and make us infinitely Solicitous to fly from the *Wrath* that is to come. And in this Diſtreſs being conſcious to himſelf that the beſt thing he can do is to reſolve upon Amendment for the future, here he puts in for *Sanctuary* having no other hole to hide his guilty Head. So that now to reſolve well is hardly an *Act* of *Choice*, and it is much to be feared that 'tis only an *Expedient* ſnatched up for the preſent Extremity; and though now he be very ſerious, yet that prehaps is only the effect of a ſuddain Caſt of *Melancholy* on his *Thoughts*; and if it be, when that removes, his

his *Thoughts* will be quite of another Colour, or if it be the *Reſult* of a more *through* Conviction, yet it is very probable that may go *off* too when the Mans *Circumſtances* are altered; that when the preſent *Tragick* Scene is removed out of ſight, and the *Alarm* of his *approaching* Judgment ſounds no longer in his Ears, he will preſently let fall thoſe Reſolutions again which he took up only as a *ſhield*, againſt his Conſcience. And this being ſo uncertain, what a fearful *Hazard* muſt that Man run that depends upon ſuch Reſolutions, and *imbarks* his Soul into *Eternity* in them? For though it is poſſible they may be ſincere, yet it is highly probable that they are not, but as they were *raiſed* only by a *Storm* of Horror, ſo if *that* were *laid* they would fall again; and if they ſhould be *Falſe* and *Hypocritical*, as God only knows whether they are or no, the poor Man is certainly *loſt* and *undone* for ever.

4. And laſtly, he reſolves in the near Neighbourhood of *Eternity*, which alſo renders his Reſolution very Suſpicious. For the *Soul* is never more ſenſible of *Eternity* than when 'tis walking on the *Confines* of it; for the very looſing it from the *Body* wherein it dwells, and in which its Motions are all confined, doth many times give her ſome *leſſer* Degrees of thoſe Advantages which *free* and *naked* Spirits have that are not *impriſoned* in Fleſh.

Fleſh. For the *leſs* the *Soul* is found to work by the *Body*, the *higher* are its Operations, and all her *extraordinary* Motions are a kind of *Raviſhment* from Senſe. It is therefore very probable that when the *Soul* is leaving the *Body*, it hath naturally a more *ſenſible* Touch and Feeling of its *eternal* State, becauſe the *nearer* any thing is to its *Reſidence*, the more *vehement* is its Motion *thither*; and conſequently the *nearer* the *Soul* is to its *eternal* Abode, the more *quick* and *vigorous* may we reaſonably ſuppoſe its Motions *thither*; ſo that when the *other* World is in view, and it is juſt upon the *Region* of *Spirits*, it is no wonder if the Senſe of her approaching *everlaſting* Fate put her into great *Tremblings* and *Agonies*. For now there is nothing between *her* and *Eternity* to *intercept* her Proſpect of it; no *ſinful* Pleaſures or Delights to *interrupt* her Thoughts of it, or *deaden* the force of its Impreſſions: ſo that if in this *State* of Things ſhe ſhould not reſolve to throw *off* her *Sins* and embrace *Vertue*, when *ſhe* is in view of that *Hell* of *endleſs* Miſeries to which thoſe tend, and of that *Heaven* of Joys to which this aſpires, it would be prodigious. But whether this Reſolution will hold when *Heaven* and *Hell* are *vaniſhed* out of ſight again, it is a mighty *Hazard*; and ſadly probable it is that if the Man recover from the *Brinks* of *Eternity*, and

and get farther *off* it, he will ſoon forget his *good* Reſolutions, and leave all his Piety behind him. For when he reſolved, alas he was *ſick* and *dying*, leaving *this* World and launching into *another*; but when he is well again, the Caſe will be altered; *this* World will be preſent to him, and the other a great way off; and when his Reſolution is thus abandoned of the Motive that *animated* and held it together, there is infinite reaſon to ſuſpect that it will immediately languiſh and expire. So that the Summ of all is this the *Death-bed* Penitent may poſſibly repent ſincerely, but 'tis an *infinite* Hazard whether he will or no; and if he doth, it is *ordinarily* impoſſible for him to have any comfortable Aſſurance of it. I will not deny but in ſome *rare* and *extraordinary* Caſes, to ſerve ſome great and excellent End, God may immediately *ſuggeſt* Comfort to him and give him the Joy of his Repentance; but whether ever he doth or will do ſo or no, is more than I am able to determine. For this I am ſure of he hath no where obliged himſelf to it, and what he hath not promiſed, we have no reaſon to expect. For whatſoever is *extraordinary*, is more than what is promiſed, but the *ordinary* Comforts of *dejected* Penitents are ſuch as ariſe from an *inward* Senſe of their own Sincerity, and of the *glorious* Hopes to which that intitles them.

them. But as for the Sincerity of the *Death-bed* Penitent it is ſo indiſcernable by reaſon of *Suſpicious* Circumſtances, that without an *immediate* Revelation it is hardly poſſible to be perceived, and from any promiſe, that God hath made, there is not the leaſt encouragement to hope for any ſuch *immediate* Revelation. So that if any ſuch Comfort be *vouchſafed* to him, it is doubtleſs very rarely; becauſe it is *extraordinary*. I know there is nothing more common than for Men that never repented till they came to *die*, to *die* very comfortably; but alas I am *horribly* afraid that generally their *Comforts* are nothing but the *Effects* either of their *Stupidity*, or their *Diſeaſe*, or elſe the *Conſequence* of very *falſe* and *dangerous* Principles.

Firſt, many times it is plainly the *Effect* of their *wretched* Stupidity and Sottiſhneſs. For ſome Men we ſee are ſo *Stupid* in their Sins, that nothing but *Hell* flames will awake them; and though when they feel themſelves upon the edge of *Eternity* paſſing into an *irreverſible* Condition, they cannot forbear reflecting on their Sins, and ſtarting at the dangerous Conſequence of them; yet if they can but ſo far obtain of themſelves as to weep for, and reſolve againſt them, they think that all is well again, and ſo go into *Eternity* with a great deal of Comfort and Aſſurance. But theſe are a ſort of *Stu-*

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pid Souls that have no regard of themſelves, that are dying *forever* but have not Senſe enough to apprehend their Danger, or to feel the Diſeaſe of which they are dying; for if they had they would never be ſo confident of their Recovery upon ſuch *ſlight* and *eaſie* Applications; they would conſider how falſe and hypocritical all their *former* Reſolutions have proved, and how much cauſe there is to ſuſpect leſt *thoſe* ſhould prove as bad as *they*, and how impoſſible it is to impoſe upon God to whoſe *all-ſeeing* Eye the *inmoſt* Nature, and *utmoſt* Iſſues of Things are open and naked, which would neceſſarily render them extreamly jealous and Solicitous concerning their *eternal* State. I am now going away into everlaſting *Weal* or *Woe*, Lord, what will become of me, the only ſecurity I have that it will go well with me *forever* is only this, that I am reſolved upon a *future* Amendment; but alas I have *too* much reaſon to ſuſpect my Reſolution is *rotten* at the Core, and if it be, Woe be to me that ever I was Born. This without all doubt would be his Language if he were but throughly awakned into a Senſe of his Danger, which becauſe he is not he dies in a *Dream* of *Happineſs* and will preſently awake in real and intolerable Miſery. And as this Comfort of the *Death-bed* Penitent doth often times ariſe from his *Stupidity*, ſo,

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Secondly, many times 'tis nothing elſe but the mere *Effect* of his Diſeaſe. For there are many Diſeaſes that have a natural *Enthuſiaſm* attending them, *viz.* ſuch as *alternately* chill and freeze the *Blood*, and put the *Spirits* into unequal Motions; and to ſuch as theſe *Dejections* and *Tranſports* do as naturally follow, as *Shiverings* and *Burnings* to an *Ague*. For when the *Blood* runs low, and the *Spirits* are weak and languid, then uſually the *Scene* is all *Tragedy*; *melancholy* Vapours *cloud* and *overwhelm* their Fancies, and they are loſt in a Wood of *Spiritual* Deſertions. But when the *Tide* turns and warmer *Blood* flows up into the *Brain*, and refreſhes the *drooping* Fancy with *Brisk* and *active* Spirits, then they are full of *Raptures* and *Extaſies*, which, becauſe they look on as ſtreaming from an *heavenly* Original, they labour to ſwell and heighten to the utmoſt Brink of their Capacities; in ſo much that ſometimes they are even ſtifled and overwhelmed with joy: and it is uſual for them, eſpecially in high *Fevers*, when their *Blood* is more briskly *fermented* by the ſharpneſs of their Humours, to chafe and tickle themſelves into real *Trances* and *Deliriums*, which they, not underſtanding the *Structure* of their own *Bodies*, and the Nature of their Diſeaſe, do commonly miſtake for the immediate *Sealings* and *Incomes* of the

the *Spirit* of God. So that if they chance to die in one of these *Tranſports*, thoſe that are *Spectators* of their End conclude that they depart in full Aſſurance, and are moſt infallibly received into the *joy* of their Maſter; whereas moſt commonly I fear their Joy expires with them, and leaves them deſperate and miſerable. But then

Thirdly, In the third and laſt place, their Comfort is many times nothing elſe but the Effect and Conſequence of their own *falſe* and *dangerous* Principles. They have entertained ſuch Principles as theſe, that their own *Perſonal* Righteouſneſs is not at all neceſſary to render them acceptable to God, and that all is required of them is to reſt and rely upon *Jeſus Chriſt*; which if they do, all their *Defects* and *Miſcarriages* ſhall be moſt certainly covered with the *Robe* of *his* Righteouſneſs, and God will look upon them, and deal with them as if they had been as righteous as he. That Men have imbibed ſuch Principles as theſe, and learned to practiſe on them, we who converſe with *Sick-beds* cannot be ignorant; for when they have gone on impenitently to their *Death-beds*, and we come to enquire into the grounds of their Hopes, this we find is the *ordinary* Refuge they fly to, that *Jeſus Chriſt* hath obeyed and ſuffered for them; and therefore they firmly rely upon him, and fling their *Souls* into

into his Arms, and make no doubt but he will catch them and ſave them from the Wrath to come: as if the deſign of our *Saviours* Undertaking had been to priviledge thoſe who believe in him to Live wickedly, and Die comfortably. That he by his *Merit* and *Satisfaction* hath obtained this Grant of his Father, that all who heartily ſubmit themſelves unto him ſhall be received into his Favour, notwithſtanding their paſt *Rebellions* and preſent *Imperfections* of Obedience, I think an undoubted Principle of *Chriſtianity*; but that he hath obtained this Favour for us *abſolutely* whether we ſubmit to his Father or no, is ſo far from being *Chriſtian*, that I think 'tis one of the moſt *Antichriſtian* Doctrines that was ever ſet on broach in the World; for it plainly defeats the main Deſign of *Chriſtianity*, and totally diſſolves all its Obligations. For whereas the principal Drift of *Chriſtianity* is to teach Men to deny *Ungodlineſs* and *Worldly luſts*, and to live *ſoberly righteouſly* and *godly* in this preſent World, *this* Doctrine unteaches all again, and gives Men a Diſpenſation to live as wickedly as they pleaſe. For if upon my *Reliance* upon Chriſt I ſhall be received into Gods Favour whether I ſubmit to him or no, farewel to all Obligations of Obedience. What need Men be ſo Sollicitous of making ſuch hear-

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ty *Submiſſions* of their *Souls* to God, if the Righteouſneſs of their *Saviour* be a *Sanctuary* from the Authority of his Laws? So that for Men to rely confidently upon *Chriſt* before they are ſecure that their *Souls* are heartily ſubjected to him, is a piece of the greateſt Arrogance and Preſumption; and tho' they may pacify their Conſcience with it when they are dying, yet when they are dead they will find they have made more bold than welcome with their *Saviour*; that he will not be a *Patron* to their ſins, nor ſide with them ſo far in their *Rebellions* againſt his Father, as to ſhelter them in his *Wounds* from the due *Vengeance* of *eternal* Fire. Altho' therefore theſe *death-bed* Penitents do *too* often dye very comfortably, yet conſidering what *falſe* grounds their Comforts generally ſtand on, I had much rather ſee them go down to their *Graves* in the greateſt *ſorrow* and *anxiety* of Soul; for if they ſhould miſcarry, as there is vaſt reaſon to fear they will, it grieves my Soul to think what a *ſurprize* they will be in, how they will be *blanked* and *amazed* when, contrary to their bold Preſumptions of waking in *immortal* Joys, they find themſelves among *Devils* and *damned Ghoſts* abandoned to *endleſs* Miſery and Deſpair. And indeed I cannot but wonder that a Man who hath deferred his Repentance to a *Death-bed* ſhould have

the confidence to talk of Comfort and Aſſurance; which is ſuch a Reward as God uſually appropriates to *long* and moſt *eminent* Piety. But for a Man that hath rebelled againſt God all his days to *pirk* up preſently after a few ſighs and ſubmiſſions, and pretend to as much Aſſurance of his *Saviour* as if he had been his *ancient* Friend and Familiar, is *down right* inexcuſeable Impudence. Alas *poor* Man! what leſs canſt thou do in Modeſty than ſpend the *ſmall* Remainder of thy Days in *Sighs*, and *Tears*, and deep *Humiliations*; and when thou haſt done thy utmoſt, to content thy ſelf with this, that thou art not altogether deſperate? But as for Comfort and Aſſurance, it would well become thee to leave *them* to thoſe who have better deſerved them; for after all thou canſt do, if thou getteſt to *Heaven* it will be a Wonder of mercy: ſo that unleſs thou art abſolutely beſotted, thou muſt die in great fear, and go trembling away into *Eternity*. So miſerable is the State of the *death-bed* Penitent, that it is a mighty Hazard whether ever he repent to purpoſe, and if he doth, it is ordinarily impoſſible to reap any comfortable aſſurance of it.

And now I expect that it will be objected againſt this Diſcourſe that it ſavours of *too* much Rigour and Severity, becauſe it repreſents the State of *dying* Penitents ſo very

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near to deſperate. To which I briefly anſwer, that if it were abſolutely deſperate, as I confeſs I think it very near ſo, yet doubtleſs the beſt way is to repreſent Things as they are: for the nature of the Thing is already fixed, and neither your Opinion nor mine will alter it. Indeed if I could recover a *dying* Man by telling him that he is not dying, it would be cruelty in me to pronounce him paſt Recovery; and ſo could I ſave the *dying* Penitent by telling him that he is ſecure, I never very much to blame ſhould I ſay his Caſe is deſperate; but alaſs! if it be ſo, it will be ſo, let me ſay what I pleaſe; ſo that in pronouncing that it is ſo, I only make him ſenſible of it a few *Moments* ſooner. I do but ſhew him what he muſt truſt to, and what he will preſently be convinced of by *woeful* Experience; and by ringing out a *paſſing Bell* to his *departing* Soul, I do him this kindneſs at leaſt that he will not be in *Hell* before he is aware of it. And certainly this is ſome Charity, tho' it be ſevere; but yet neither do I repreſent the Caſe to be altogether deſperate, tho' I muſt confeſs ſome very great and eminent *Divines* have done ſo; for I have endeavoured to ſhew that *true* Repentance is not *impoſſible* on a *Death-bed*, tho' extreamly *hazardous* and *difficult*; ſo that ſtill there is *ſome* Hope,

enough to incourage the Sinners *utmoſt* Endeavour, and keep his Head *above* water; and for him to give up himſelf to Deſpair while there is any glimmering of hope, is to enter into *Hell* before his time, which is a degree of imprudence next to *that* he hath been already guilty of, in putting himſelf upon this diſmal Extremity. But ſuppoſing it had been repreſented as wholly deſperate, yet this can occaſion no Man that hears me to deſpair, unleſs it be thro' his own Default. For God be praiſed I am not now preaching to a ſick or dying *Auditory*; you are now well and in health, and have a ſpace and ſeaſon of Repentance before you, which if you will but diligently improve, you prevent the *fearful* Hazard whereunto a *death-bed* Penitence expoſes you. But if thro' your own Neglect you ſhould fall into it and deſpair in it, who can you blame but your ſelves for it. All that I aim at is to prevent your Danger by perſuading you to repent betime; but if you will be ſo cruel to your ſelves as to delay it till it is *too* late, and then *Deſpair* overtake you, *you* may thank your ſelves for it that would take no warning. And therefore to render this Argument yet more effectual, I intend to repreſent to you at large the *Folly* and *Wickedneſs* of deferring our Repentance to the

the laſt, and thereby to excite and provoke you to a *ſpeedy* Reſolution of Amendment; that ſo when the *Bridegroom* comes you may not with theſe *fooliſh Virgins* in my Text find the *Door* of *Heaven* ſhut againſt you, but that having finiſhed your work, you may be admitted with *that good and profitable Servant into the joy of your Maſter.*

REVELATIONS II. 21.

I gave her ſpace to repent of her fornication and ſhe repented not.

THE Perſon here ſpoken of is *Jeſabel*, as you may ſee in the foregoing verſe; but who this *Jeſabel* was is very much diſputed by *Expoſitors*. *Epiphanius* and ſome that follow him refer this title to thoſe Women Hereticks, *Priſcilla*, *Maximilla*, and *Quintilla* who followed *Montanus*, and about *Commodus* his Reign took upon them to be *Propheteſſes*, and under *that* pretence propagated many monſtrous *Hereſies*. But ſince it muſt be after St. *John*'s time that thoſe Women were in the *Church* of *Thiatira*, and ſince St. *John* here ſpeaks not *propheticallly* of what ſhould be, but *hiſtorically* of what already was, it is not ſuppoſeable that theſe *Montaniſt Women* ſhould be the *Jeſabel* here ſpoken of: beſides that the *Character* here given her doth not agree with that *Sect*, for theſe *Montaniſts* were a very ſevere and ſtrict *Sect*, and that was the main motive which ſeduced *Tertullian* to it; whereas this *Jeſabel*, or *Sect* deſcribed by her Name, is here accuſed of *Fornication*, and ſacrificing to *Idols*. So that it ſeems more probable that by *her* is meant either

either the whole *Sect* of the *Gnosticks*, which as all agree was infamous for *Leudness*, *Uncleanness* and *Idolatry*; or else some particular *Woman* who was an eminent *Patroness* and *Ring-leader* of that Party. And if he mean this *latter*, as it seems most probable by the Distinction he makes between *her* and those that committed *Adultery* with her, that is, her Followers; then it is probable that he means *Helena* the *Whore* of *Simon Magus*, who was Father of the *Gnosticks*; whom he stiled his πρώτη ἔννοια, or *first Conception*. And well might she be called *Jesabel*, since she so much resembled the Wife of *Ahab* called by that name in her notorious *Whoredoms* and *Idolatries*; but yet in her he reprehends the whole *Sect* which was all involved with her in the same Impenitence. So that it was equally true both of *her* and of her Followers, *that God gave them space to repent of their Fornications, and they repented not*, that is, Gods patience waited on them, and gave them time to reform their *leud* and *infamous* Practices; but still they deferred and put it off, and under all his *Forbearance* continued obstinate and impenitent. So that the design of the Words is to represent the *Evil* of Mens putting off their Repentance when God in mercy forbears them, and gives them space enough to perform it. And how great an *Evil* this is I shall indeavour to represent to you,

1. By ſhewing you the *Wickedneſs*,
2. The *Abſurdity*, and
3. The *Danger* of it.

1. I ſhall ſhew you the Wickedneſs of it, and that in theſe following particulars:

1. 'Tis a *prophane* mockery of God's Patience.
2. 'Tis an *ungrateful* Undervaluing of his Service.
3. 'Tis an *open* Contempt to his Authority.
4. 'Tis an *impious* Preſumption on his Goodneſs.
5. 'Tis an *arrogant* defiance of his Diſpleaſure.

1. To defer and put off our Repentance when God gives us ſpace to repent is a *prophane* Mockery of his Patience. That he did not ſtrike us *dead* upon our firſt ſin, and conſign us immediatly to the *chains* of Darkneſs, was purely the Effect of his Goodneſs; 'twas this that obliged him to try us a little longer in hope that at laſt we might be prevailed with to conſider our danger, and correct our folly before it had determined us to an *irreverſible* Ruin. Whilſt therefore we linger out the ſpace of our Repentance in Delays, we ſport and *dally* with the Patience of God; we promiſe fair, and give it hope that it ſhall at laſt obtain its Ends upon us; but when we come to performance,

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we *baffle* and *diſappoint* it, and render all its *paſt* attendance ineffectual. For when the Date of our *former* Promiſe is expired, and God expects our Performance, inſtead of that, we only give him new Promiſes, and pay him with *Words* inſtead of *Things*; as if by our Promiſes we only intended to raiſe in him an expectation of our Repentance, that ſo we might have an opportunity to vex him with a Diſappointment. We promiſe we will repent *hereafter* only to get leave to ſin for the *preſent*, and ſo when *that hereafter* comes we promiſe again, and only repeat the *old* Deluſion; as if we meant to *tantalize* his Patience by profering the *golden* Fruit of our Repentance, and ſnatching it away again before he can lay hold of it. Now what a *fearful* wickedneſs is this for Men to put ſuch Tricks upon the *Almighty*, ſtill to defer the payment of a Debt that hath been ſo long due, and ſo often demanded, and ſtill to pay his *Demands* with Promiſes, and only feed his Expectations with Air! as tho' we thought him bound to attend our *Leiſure*, and to give us Credit to run deeper on ſcore upon the ſecurity of our Promiſe of *future* Payment which we have already forfeited over and over.

2. Thus to put off and delay our Repentance, is a moſt *baſe* and *ungrateful* Undervaluing of his Service: For the Reaſon why we delay

delay our Repentance, is, becauſe we think it will be time enough to return to our Duty *hereafter*, when the Opportunities of Sin are gone, and the Pleaſure of it is out of ſeaſon. For into what *other* ſenſe can God conſtrue our *Delays* but only this, that it is our Deſign to ſhift *off* him and his Service, till we have ſerved our Luſts as long as we are able, and never to begin our Repentance till we are able to be wicked no longer. Now I beſeech you, could *you* without Horror and Trembling make ſuch an *Addreſs* to God as this, *O God, I know it is my Duty, and the very End of my Life to ſerve thee; but I beſeech thee, be not angry, if while I live I ſerve my Luſts, and imploy the Powers thou haſt given me in Rebellion againſt thee: And if thou wilt but indulge me this, I will be thy humble Servant when I am good for nothing, neither to ſerve, nor diſobey thee: Do but have Patience till I am Bed-rid, and can enjoy the World and my Luſts no longer, and then I will return to thee, and be ſorry for my Sins, and wiſh that I had never offended thee. I would now devote the Service of my Youth and Strength to thee, but that I am ſenſible it is too good for thee; and therefore come what will, I will feed my Luſts with the Marrow of my Days, and if the dull inſipid Bone will content thee, it is at thy Service.* This, though it be *horrible* Language, is yet the *natural* Senſe of our *Delays*. We would repent immedi-

mediately, but that we think it is a Thouſand Pities ſuch *fair* Opportunities of ſinning ſhould be loſt, and ſo many *precious* Minutes ſhould be ſo *ill* beſtowed: So that the reaſon of our *Delay* is this, that at preſent we apprehend we can ſpend our time more pleaſantly in ſinning on, than in the Exerciſe of a *ſevere* Repentance, and conſequently, while we can ſtill ſin on with Pleaſure, we ſhall ſtill have the ſame reaſon to delay, and never think it reaſonable to begin our Repentance till we are old, decrepid, or dying, and can ſin with Pleaſure no longer. Now what a *profane* Reflection is it upon God and his Service, to think our ſelves *too* good to ſerve him till we are good for nothing; that the *Dregs* and *Lees* of our Life are good enough for him, and that he ought to be ſatisfied with the *leavings* of our Luſts, and to take it as a Favour that we will repent of our ſins when we are no longer capable of ſinning with Pleaſure? With what Patience can he endure to be thus ſlighted and contemned by us, to be thus rudely put off with the *Refuſe* of our Luſts, thus unmannerly treated with the *Scraps* of the *Devil*'s Table?

3. To defer our Repentance when God gives us ſpace to repent, is an open contempt of his Authority; for by the Laws of *Religion* we are bound either always to continue

tinue innocent, or when we have contracted any Guilt, to expiate it by *immediate* Repentance; for ſo long as we continue under any guilty Impenitence, we are in a ſtate of *actual* Rebellion againſt God, and are not only accountable for the Guilt of the firſt Sin, but alſo for *that* of not having repented of it. And though we do not repeat the firſt Sin any more, yet our very continuing impenitent under the Guilt of it, brings a diſtinct Guilt upon us, and renders us doubly criminal in the ſight of God; for unleſs our ſinning againſt God doth *cancel* the Obligation of his Laws, they muſt neceſſarily oblige us to repent, that is, to revoke our wicked purpoſe, and return to our Obedience as ſoon as ever we have broken and tranſgreſſed it. 'Tis true indeed as for particular *affirmative* Precepts, they being always relative to *Time*, and *Place*, and *Perſons*, are to be practiſed only in *ſpecial* Times, and *pertinent* Occaſions, becauſe they being but Parts of a good Life, muſt give way by turns for other Parts and Inſtances of it, which are of the like particular and limited Nature with themſelves; but yet we are always obliged to the Purpoſe and Diſpoſition of Practiſing theſe, whenſoever Occaſion doth require it. A man is not always bound to be doing *Juſtice*, by giving *Alms*, or ſaying his *Prayers*; but to the *Devotion* of Prayer,

er, the *Diſpoſition* of Juſtice, and the *Charity* of Alms he is continually obliged: Theſe being Works of the *inward* Man cannot be limited to Times and Opportunities, nor receive any *accidental* Determinations from without, but are always poſſible, and always good, and always neceſſary; for the performance of them depends only on the *Grace* of God, and the *Will* of Man, and *that* never fails, if *this* doth not; and therefore is always poſſible, unleſs we will not, but it is always neceſſary whether we will or no: So that when we have broken our purpoſe of obeying God by any *actual* Sin, it is another diſtinct Sin, not to renew it by *immediate* Repentance, and when by this actual Sin, we have loſt our diſpoſition to obey God, and contracted the contrary, there is in this a *proper* Guilt, and Venom diſtinct from that *actual* Sin that introduced it. But then there are *general* Precepts, of *Religion*, ſuch as to love God, and to Repent from *dead* Works; the *firſt* of which includes the *whole* Religion of a Man, the *ſecond*, the *whole* Religion of a Sinner; and conſequently we being *both*, muſt needs be univerſally obliged to both theſe Duties in all Accidents, Times, and Caſes. For when once we have *apoſtatized* from our Duty, all our *after-obedience* is an Act of Repentance; and therefore though the Command of it be affirma-

firmative, yet becauſe it is univerſal, including all thoſe Duties, which by binding at *ſeveral* Times, do fill up all our Time; there can be no Time in which we are not bound to repent. This I have the longer inſiſted on, becauſe it is a great *Queſtion* among the *Roman Caſuiſts*, whether a Man be always bound to this Duty, and *ſome* of them have been ſo wicked, as to determin that a Man is not bound to repent till he comes to die; *others*, that it is ſufficient if he repent *once* a Year; others *thrice* upon the Three great *Holidays* of *Chriſtmas*, *Eaſter*, and *Whitſunday*; as if there were any time wherein it was not our Duty to return to our Duty; or the Laws of our Religion did only oblige us at certain ſeaſons, and in the Intervals gave us a *free* Diſpenſation to live as wickedly as we pleaſed. Since therefore as ſoon as we have ſinned, we are bound *immediately* to repent, it neceſſarily follows, that he who ſins, and then delays his Repentance, ſins Twice; his very Delay being a farther Provocation. For how can we imagine that he who perſiſts in *Rebellion* againſt God Twenty Years together, doth not much more offend him, than he who ſubmits within Twenty *Months*, or Twenty *Days*, or Twenty *Hours*; and if the longer we perſiſt, the more we do offend him, then every *delay* of our Repentance muſt needs be a further

ther Provocation. The Sum of all therefore is this, that every Day God calls us to Repentance, and that every Call of his ought to be regarded, and conſequently, that every regardleſs *Delay* of it, adds to the heap of our Guilt, and helps to fill up the Meaſure of our Iniquities. And what a *rude* Contempt is it of Gods Authority, when he commands us to repent to *Day*, to cry well we will repent *to morrow*? *Lord, we beſeech thee be not ſo haſty with us, ſuffer us to offend thee yet a little longer; for whether thou wilt or no, we are reſolved to do it. We will repent, but will not be preſcribed when, as for that, leave it to us, for ſay what thou wilt, we are fully reſolved to take leave to do it when we pleaſe.* This in effect is the impious meaning of every *Delay* of our Repentance, and when God commands us to repent, we might as modeſtly tell him that we will not repent at all, as when he commands us to repent *now*, tell him, that we will repent *hereafter*.

4. To defer our Repentance when God giveth us ſpace to repent, is an *impious* Preſumption on his Goodneſs. The reaſon why God forbears us when we ſin, is to give us *ſecond* Thoughts, and to ſee our Danger, and to run away from it; that ſo he may not *ſurprize* us into ruine: for the end of his *long-ſuffering*, is to lead us to Repentance; but when upon this Conſideration we take

take encouragement to delay, we do not only defeat his Goodneſs, but ſo far as in us lies, render it injurious to him. For we war againſt him under the Protection of his kindneſs to us, and fortifie our ſelves in our *Rebellion*, in that very *Goodneſs*, and *Long-ſuffering*, with which he ſeeks to conquer and ſubdue us. O barbarous Ingratitude! that we ſhould fetch Arguments from his mercy to offend him, and maintain Enmity againſt him out of the *Revenue* of his own Indulgence! would you not look on that *Malefactor* as a *Monſter*, that ſhould rob his *Judge* meerly becauſe he reprieved him, and uſe him with all the Deſpite and Ignominy, becauſe he knew him to be a *merciful* Man, and will be loath to hang him the next *Seſſions*? and is it not altogether as monſtrous for us to abuſe God, becauſe he is kind to us, and to take Encouragement to rob him of our Duty, becauſe we know he is unwilling to ruine us? but tho' every Man hath not Impudence enough to aſſign *this* Reaſon, yet it is plain, this lies at the bottom of all their *Delays. Becauſe Sentence againſt an evil Work is not executed ſpeedily*, ſaith the Wiſe Man, *therefore the Heart of the Sons of Men is fully ſet in 'em to do Evil*, Eccleſ. 8. 11. But what *horrid* Baſeneſs is this, to urge his Goodneſs againſt himſelf, and fetch Motives from his Mercy to affront his Authority? it ſeems, if he

he were *worſe* to us, we would be *better* to *him*: if he were leſs kind, we would be more dutiful. O Wretches that we are! I had almoſt ſaid, 'tis even *pity* that we have a God to deal with, that we are not under the Government of ſome *Fury* that would watch for our *halting*, and catch at all Opportunities to plague and puniſh us; and we were beſt have a care we do not preſume too much upon God, for tho' he bears long, he will not bear always; and there is nothing can ſooner provoke him, than to ſee us conduct our *Rebellions* againſt him under the *Banners* of his own Goodneſs. This is ſuch an *intolerable* Provocation as is ſufficient to inrage a *Soul* of Patience, and turn the moſt *boundleſs* Mercy into *Fury*: and if once his Wrath be kindled againſt us, he will make us rue for ever in our Abuſes of his Goodneſs.

5. And laſtly, To defer our Repentance when God gives us ſpace for it, is an *arrogant* Defiance of his Diſpleaſure, for God hath ſufficiently declared to us the Diſpleaſure he takes in the *Delays* of our Repentance. Thus in his *holy* Word he hath given us fair warning of it; thus *Rom.* 2. 4. *deſpiſeſt thou the Riches of his Goodneſs, and Forbearance, and Long-ſuffering, not knowing that the Goodneſs of God leadeth thee to Repentance?* From whence I argue 1. that the Goodneſs of

God is a *Motive* to Repentance. 2. That not to be perſuaded by it, is to deſpiſe his Goodneſs. 3. That this deſpiſing his Goodneſs by *delaying* our Repentance, *is treaſuring up Wrath againſt the Day of Wrath.* So alſo *Rev.* 2.5. *remember from whence thou art faln, and repent, and do thy firſt Works; or elſe I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy Candleſtick out of its place except thou repent.* Where he plainly declares, that if our Repentance be not very quickly, his Judgments will be *too* quick for us: by which he plainly ſignifies how much he is diſpleaſed with our *Delays*, how importunately they urge and provoke him to overwhelm us with a *ſpeedy* Deſtruction And accordingly we ſee by Experience, how he takes ſome away in their *early* ſins, and gives them no reſpite; and he who hath made it *Damnation* to ſome for not repenting inſtantly, hath made it *damnable* to all. The Earth doth not open, and *ſwallow* up all *Rebels* in the Day of their Mutiny; but it did ſo *once*, and thereby God hath ſufficiently ſignified to all Ages his Diſpleaſure againſt *Rebellion*; And ſo it is in deferring Repentance; for that ſome have ſmarted for it *eternally* is a ſufficient Manifeſtation that God is diſpleaſed with every one that defers it. Whilſt therefore we delay our Repentance from time to time, we ſit down quietly under the

divine

divine Diſpleaſure, as if it were altogether indifferent whether the *Almighty* be pleaſed or diſpleaſed with us; we do as good as ſay, *Lord, we know well enough thou wouldſt have us repent immediately, and that if we do not, thou wilt be angry with us; but be thou never ſo angry, we will not repent as yet, we muſt enjoy our Luſts a little longer, and if thou wilt be diſpleaſed, we will run the venture. We had rather endure thy Frowns a while, than part with our ſins for ever, and think it much more tolerable to be hated by the Fountain of all Love and Goodneſs, than abandoned of all our ſinful Pleaſures.* This is ſuch Language perhaps as the *boldeſt* Sinner would hardly be able to pronounce without trembling, but yet ſuch as it is, it is the natural Senſe of every Mans Actions, who delays and puts off his Repentance: he knows that God is diſpleaſed with him, but regards it not, and as if he were ambitious of being a *Heroe* in Wickedneſs, he defies *Heaven*, and dallies with its *Thunder-bolts*, and runs into the Mouth of its *Canon* whilſt they are ſpitting Fire, and roaring out Deſtruction upon him.

And thus you ſee the monſtrous Wickedneſs of Mens delaying their Repentance, which is ſuch, as had we not *ſeared* our Conſciences, and ſtifled our *natural* Senſe of God, we could never be able to reflect on without *Horror* and *Agonies*. And ſo I paſs to the

Second Head of Diſcourſe, the great *Abſurdity* of delaying our Repentance; which I ſhall endeavour to demonſtrate in theſe following particulars.

1. It is putting *off* a Work that muſt be done to the moſt *unfitting* Seaſon of doing it.
2. It is putting it *off* upon no other Reaſon, but what will *hereafter* be more prevalent than *now*.
3. It deprives us of the Satisfaction of having done what we muſt do at laſt, and prolongs the Pain and Trouble of doing it.
4. It defers the doing it upon no other Preſumption, but that it ſhall *one* Day dearly repent of its own Neglect.

1. To delay our Repentance, is to put *off* a Work that muſt be done to the moſt *unfitting* Seaſon of doing it. That Repentance is indiſpenſibly neceſſary to the *Recovery* and *Happineſs* of a Sinner, is a Principle wherein all the *reaſonable* World are agreed; and ſince it muſt be done, it is highly reaſonable we ſhould take the beſt Opportunity of doing it, and for a Man to ſay, I muſt do ſuch a thing, and am reſolved to do it, but however, I will take the moſt *improper* Seaſon to do it in, is the moſt *abſurd* and *ridiculous* Thing in the World. But for a Man to repent in, there is no Seaſon can be ſo

ſo convenient as the *preſent*; for it will never be ſo eaſy for us to repent as *now*; the difficulty of it will daily grow upon our hands, and if we do not engage in it *immediately*, it will be harder to *morrow* than it is to *day*. When Men begin to ſin, their Nature *ſtarts* and *boggles* at it, from an *innate* Senſe of God, and of their Duty, and this natural *ſhineſs* muſt be tamed and broken e'er they can be *through-pac'd* in Wickedneſs; but when they have inured themſelves to it by *frequent* Acts, they grow by degrees familiar with it, and then every *Act* breeds *Delight* in it, and every *Delight* begets a *Deſire* of repeating it, and that *Deſire* brings forth a *new* Act. And when a Man hath walked the *Rounds* a while in this Circle, at laſt he centers in *Cuſtom* and *Habit* of ſinning, and then every new *Act* will confirm the *Habit*, and root it deeper in our Natures, and ſo as we ſin on, it will grow ſtronger and ſtronger, 'till at laſt it becomes almoſt *fatal* and *neceſſary*, and then the Lord have mercy upon us; for without a *Miracle* of Grace we ſhall never be able to retrieve our ſelves. Thus every ſtep we take in our ſinful Progreſs, leads us further out of our way, and renders our return more *hard* and *difficult*, ſo that by going on in a *ſinful* Courſe, we do what in us lies to *block up* the way of our Return, and do as it were build a Wall be-

hind us, to diſable our ſelves from making *any* Retreat. What a ridiculous Thing therefore is it for Men to pretend that they will repent, but not yet; when it is ſo apparent, that if they repent not now, it will never be ſo eaſie again as long as they live? To *Morrow* it will be more difficult than *now*, and every Day it is delayed will drive it nearer to an Impoſſibility: So that by our *fooliſh* Delays, we do but make Work for our ſelves, and heap up *Difficulties* on our own Heads; we reſolve that we will repent, but withal, that we will not go about it, till we have render'd it *more* difficult, and our ſelves *leſs* able to do it. Our Soul is wounded, and muſt die without the ſovereign *Balſom* of Repentance, which we therefore reſolve to apply and make uſe of; but firſt her *Wound* ſhall *feſter* into a *Gangrene*, not to be cured, but by the moſt painful *Lancings*, and *Corroſives*. And can there be any Thing more ridiculous for a Man to reſolve to do a Thing, and at the ſame time reſolve to make it more difficult before he doth it? For certainly, if our Repentance after ſo many *Delays*, ſhould at laſt commence, which is very queſtionable, it will in all probability be accompanied with ſo many *ſad* Circumſtances, ſo many *Tumults* of Paſſion, and *Uproars* of Conſcience, ſo many *piercing* Sorrows, and *bitter* Agonies, that we ſhall dearly

dearly *repent* we did not repent ſooner.

2. To delay our Repentance, is to reſolve to defer this Work to *hereafter*, upon a Reaſon which will *then* be much more prevalent than *now*; and for a Man to defer a Thing to *hereafter* which he reſolves to do upon ſuch a Reaſon as will be much more prevalent *hereafter* than *now*, is doubtleſs the abſurdeſt Thing in the World. Now the main Reaſon why Men are *now* unwilling to repent is, becauſe they love their ſins, and are unwilling to part with them, and in all likelihood, hereafter they will be much more unwilling; ſo that this Reaſon will every Day improve upon their hands, and have ſo much the more ſtrength, by how much the longer they defer their Repentance: So that we can have no Reaſon in the World againſt fixing on the *preſent* Time, but only becauſe it is *preſent*; but when *hereafter* comes to be *preſent*, the Reaſon will be juſt the ſame. But as for our Unwillingneſs to leave our ſins, if that be the Reaſon of our Delay, that will every Day increaſe and grow more prevalent upon us; for Sin gains upon the Will by Practice, the Delight of it recommends it to the *Deſire*, and renders us more fond of its Embraces; ſo that if we defer our Repentance till *hereafter*, becauſe we are unwilling to leave our Sins, when that *hereafter* is preſent, we

ſhall have much more reaſon to defer than now; and ſo the plain Senſe of our deferring our Repentance upon this reaſon, is this, *I cannot yet forſake my Sins, becauſe I love them, and am highly pleaſed with them, but hereafter I am reſolved I will; but firſt I will act them a little longer, and grow more in love with them, and then when I love them more, and am more inſlaved to them, I will be ſure to hate and forſake them for ever.* Whilſt therefore we *delay* our Repentance, becauſe our Sins do pleaſe us, we ſhall have the ſame reaſon to *delay* it for ever. For the longer we live in Sin, in all probability, the more it will pleaſe us; and ſo *Twenty* Years hence, the reaſon of our *Delay* will be far more prevalent than *now*; and if we forſake not our ſin till it ceaſes to pleaſe us, we ſhall never forſake it as long as we live: So that to reſolve not to repent *now*, becauſe our ſins do pleaſe us, is the ſame thing in effect as to reſolve not to repent at all; and indeed this generally lies at the bottom of all ſuch Reſolutions, when mens Conſciences like *importunate* Creditors begin to *dun* and *clamour* upon them, they are forc'd many times to give good Words, and appoint ſome *future* Day of Payment, elſe they will put them to a great deal of Trouble, and ever and anon arreſt them with Horrors and Affrightments; but ſtill they purpoſe to run further in Debt,

and

and to put *off* the Day of payment from time to time, till they are utterly *insolvent*. So that by these promises of repenting *hereafter*, Men only delude themselves, and under a *specious* Pretence of *future* Repentance put tricks upon their Consciences to blind and bribe them that may not disturb them whilst they are sinning themselves into Ruin.

3. By delaying our Repentance we deprive our selves of the satisfaction of having done what we must do at last, and prolong the pain and trouble of doing it. To have accomplish'd a necessary Work, especially if it be difficult and important, is a *great* satisfaction to the Mind; and whereas, whilst it is yet to do, the prospect of the Pain and Labour we must undergo in doing it creates in us a great deal of *Trouble* and *Anxiety*; when once it is done, the very *Reflection* on the Pains and Labours we have past, sweetens our *present* repose, and crowns it with *greater* Joy and Triumph. And so it is with Repentance, which we all acknowledge to be a most necessary Work, and of the vastest *Moment* and Importance to us; and tho' it be never so painful and difficult, yet we must undergo it, or that which is much more intolerable; so that if once it were done, it could not but give a *great* satisfaction to our Minds, and fill us with *unspeakable* Joy. When a Man shall thus reflect with himself, *Blessed*

be

be God, I have done that work, which had it been yet to do I muſt have done, or been undone for ever. I charged thro' all thoſe pains and difficulties that were wont to ſtartle and affright me, and by the grace of Heaven am come off victoriouſly. O happy Atchievement! how well am I rewarded for all my labour! now I am paſt it, and ſettled in the quiet poſſeſſion of my conqueſt! When, I ſay, a Man can thus reflect with himſelf, it muſt needs be *unſpeakable* Pleaſure to him: whereas he who defers his Repentance and hath it yet to do, is in *perpetual* pain and anxiety; whilſt he thus conſiders with himſelf, *alas, to repent is a very ſad and painful work! but yet at laſt I muſt undergo it, or ſuffer that which is a thouſand times more painful. I muſt lament and weep for my folly, watch and pray againſt it, ſtruggle with and overcome it, or rue for it to all Eternity. O that it were done! but O how loth am I to go about it! O that my pain were over! but O how afraid am I to indure it! Thus the poor* Wretch for fear of Pain expoſes himſelf to a *lingering* Torment, and whilſt by one *brave* Attempt he might eaſe himſelf, and ſet his ſoul at reſt for ever, he languiſhes away his Life in miſery, and is ſick with the fear of his Remedy: juſt like ſome Men under the torments of the *Stone*, they know they muſt be *cut* or *die*, but the frightful apprehenſions they have of their Remedy

Remedy makes them delay it from time to time. They will indure it, they ſay, rather than loſe their Lives, but when they come to the tryal their heart fails and they muſt needs have a little longer reſpite; and all the while they are full of pain and uneaſineſs, and full of *ſad* Apprehenſions of thoſe ſeverer pains they muſt indure in order to their recovery, and yet theſe at laſt they muſt indure too or that which is much more terrible to them; whereas had they but indured them at firſt, they might have ſaved themſelves all thoſe Torments, and all thoſe Fears of farther Torments which they indured in the time of their delay. And is not this extreamly abſurd and ridiculous? And yet juſt thus it is with thoſe who put *off* their Repentance. Had they repented on their *firſt* Lapſe, their hearts might have been at eaſe a great while ago, and they might have ſaved themſelves all thoſe *gripes* and *twinges* of Conſcience which they have been forced to indure. But Repentance they thought was a *ſad* remedy, and the fear of that *too* augmented the torment of their diſeaſe. But be it never ſo ſad, they know well enough they muſt at laſt apply it, or periſh for ever. Well; but they will apply it, that they reſolve on; but fain they would have a little longer reſpite. Ah fooliſh Souls! will it *hereafter* be more eaſy than

than *now* to you? Will your *Delay* do you think mollify the pain and anguiſh of it? Alas no, it will rather render it *more* dolorous. So that all the while you delay, and think of it only but do not do it, you do but *anticipate* the Torment, and prolong the miſery of it; and whereas if once it were done you would be at reſt, and all the pain of your *paſt* Guilt, and the fear of your *future* Repentance would be over; whilſt you only think of it but do it not, is is a *continued* Diſeaſe to you, and the very Apprehenſions you have of it are many times more dolorous than the performance.

4. And laſtly, to delay our Repentance is to do a thing upon no other preſumption, but that we ſhall one Day repent of our own Action. And can there be any thing more ridiculous than for a Man to do an Action in hope that he ſhall live to repent of it? for either the Action is reaſonable, or not, if it be, why ſhould he hope to repent of it? if it be not, why ſhould he be ſo extravagant to do it? ſo that for a Man to do a Thing upon Preſumption that he ſhall repent of it, is to *proclaim* himſelf a Fool; and yet this is the Caſe of him that *delays* his Repentance. For that this very *Delay* is a Sin ſuperadded to thoſe *criminal* Actions of which he ought to repent, I have already

ready demonſtrated; from whence it neceſſarily follows, that *this* muſt be repented of as well as *thoſe*. So that for Men to encourage themſelves not to repent at *preſent*, in hope that they ſhall repent *hereafter*, is to act profeſſedly contrary to the reaſons of Things. For if the Nature of our *Delay* is ſuch as that we have reaſon to hope we ſhall one day repent of it, this is ſo far from being a *proper* Encouragement to it, that it is one of the *ſtrongeſt* Reaſons that can be urged againſt it; and for a Man to *rob* in hope to be hang'd for it, or to drink deadly *Poiſon* in hope to be convulſed and tormented with it, is every whit as wiſe and rational, as to *delay* our Repentance in hope to repent of it. For who but a *Mad-man*, or one that is reſolved to act counter to all Rules of Reaſon, would ever practiſe on this *extravagant* Concluſion; *I will do this or that Action at preſent, in hope that hereafter I ſhall be ſorry for, and extreamly aſhamed of it, and wiſh a Thouſand times that I had never done it. I know it is a great Evil, and do plainly perceive, that one time or other I ſhall find it ſo; but come what will, I will venture upon it, in hope that hereafter I ſhall be aſhamed with the horror of it, and tormented for it upon the Rack of a ſelf-condemning Conſcience.* And now, I beſeech you, is this a *reaſonable* Hope, or *proper* Encouragement for a *wiſe* Man to act

upon

upon? or rather, is it not one of the moſt *abſurd* and *fooliſh* that ever any *Fool* or *Mad-man* proceeded on? and yet this is plainly the Meaning of our Pretenſion, when we *delay* our Repentance in hope to repent of it *hereafter*.

And thus you ſee how extravagantly abſurd it is for Men to *defer* and put *off* their Repentance; ſo that methinks had we any *Reverence* for our ſelves, any *Reſpect* for thoſe *reaſonable* Natures by which we are conſtituted Men, we ſhould be aſhamed to act ſo inconſiſtently with all the Rules of *Reaſon* and *Sobriety*: and ſo I paſs on to

3. The Third and laſt Head, under which I propoſed to demonſtrate the mighty Evil of delaying our Repentance, and that is the Danger of it; which I ſhall endeavour to make appear in theſe following particulars.

1. Every *Delay* of our Repentance, is a nearer Approach towards *final* Impenitence.
2. 'Tis a *deſperate* Venture of our Opportunity of Repentance.
3. It *indangers* the forfeiting that Grace without the Aſſiſtance whereof we cannot repent.
4. It *drives* us *nearer* to the *laſt* Extremity.

1. Eve-

1. Every *Delay* of our Repentance is a nearer Approach towards *final* Impenitence. For a ſinful State is like a *ſhelving* Pool, in which the farther a man wades, the deeper it is; and ſo deeper and deeper till he come to the bottom of it; and when we are there, we are ſunk beyond all hope of Recovery; ſo that at every ſtep forward, we are in Danger of going beyond our Depth, and plunging into an *irreverſible* Ruine. For *final* Impenitence, which is the Conſummation and Perfection of all Sin, is nothing but a *perſevering* Neglect, or Refuſal to repent. And as a Man is always dying, and that which we call *Death* is only the *laſt* and *finiſhing* Act of it; ſo *final* Impenitence is not the Sin of one *Day* or *Moment*, unleſs it be by accident, but it is a ſtate of Sin, begun as ſoon as ever the Sin is acted, and carried on through each *repeated* Action, and in fine is nothing but the ſame Sin ſo many times told over. But if it ſhould happen, that he who ſinned *Yeſterday* ſhould die to *Day*, it would be *final* Impenitance in him to defer his Repentance that one Day. So that our firſt *Delay* of Repentance, is the beginning of our *final* Impenitence, which in all its *Periods* differs from the *Delay* only by Chance and Accident; it is materially the *ſame* Sin, and if Death chance to ſtrike the next *Moment*, it will alſo have the *ſame* Formality.

For

For as he that dies *young*, dies as really as he that dies after *Fourſcore* Years, ſo he that dies in the midſt of a ſhort *Delay* of his Repentance is as well *finally* Impenitent, as he that is ſnatch'd away to die *for ever* after *Fourſcore* Years Impenitence; for though the Evil be not ſo *great*, nor the Judgment conſequent to it ſo *heavy*, yet is it as *fatal*, and as *irreverſible* as the *Decree* of Damnation on the *fallen* Angels. So that all the Time we *delay*, and put *off* our Repentance, we are bordering on the worſt of Evils, we are juſt upon the *Confines* of an *irreverſible* Miſchief, and the next ſtep for all we know may carry us beyond Recovery. For if Death ſhould intervene between us and to *morrow*, this Days *delay* will be *fatal*, and *irreparable*. And can we ſtand upon the *brinks* of this *Precipice*, and feel how the ground ſinks underneath us, and yet ſleep on ſecurely, without ever thinking whether we are falling, or being in the leaſt concerned at this *amazing* Proſpect of our Danger? Methinks if we had any concern for our own ſafety, we ſhould think it high time *now* to ſtart up, and run away from our *neighbouring* Ruin, and not preſume any longer to ſwim within the Circumference of this *fatal Whirl-Pool* that is every *Moment* ſucking us in, and for all we know the next Moment may ſwallow us up irrecoverably.

2. Every

2. Every *Delay* of our Repentance is a deſperate Venture of the *Opportunity* we have to repent in, and that is this *preſent* Life, which is the *Day* in which we are to do our Work, the *Time* of Tryal in which we are to paſs our *Probation*, and perform our *Exerciſe* for *Eternity*; and therefore conſidering how uncertain this Life is, and to how many *Events* and *Caſualties* it is expoſed, it muſt needs be a moſt *deſperate* Venture for a Man to *delay* his Repentance. For who can tell but while we talk of repenting *hereafter*, there may be ſome *latent* Diſeaſe *undermining* the *Fort* of Life, and ready to ſeize the *Garriſon* of our Souls; So that perhaps before *this* Day is at an end, we may be ſurpriſed in the midſt of our *Delay*, and loſe all our hopes of to *morrow*? For what is *vain* Man that he ſhould talk of repenting *hereafter*, when perhaps, whilſt the Word is in his Mouth, there may be an *Impoſthume* in his Head or Breaſt, or a *ripe harden'd Stone* in his Kidney ready to drop down into his Bladder the next Moment; when he may be *inflamed* with a *Fever* by what he drinks to *Night*, or drowned in a *Surfeit* with what he eats to Morrow; when he may *expire* his Soul with the next Breath, or ſuck in *Poiſon* with the next Air, and ſo many *unlook'd* for Accidents may put an end to his talk of repenting *here-*

after, and render it impoſſible for ever. And ſuppoſe we ſhould be thus *ſurprized*, as many others have been before us, that while we are *merry* and *jolly* in our Sins, that all on a ſuddain we ſhould be hurried away out of the Company of our *jovial* Aſſociates, into that of *howling* and *tormented* Spirits, and from our *Songs* and *Laughter* into *weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing of Teeth*; how ſhould we be *blanked* and *amazed*, and with what *Horror* and *Aſtoniſhment* ſhould we reflect upon the *woful* Change; and upon our own *deſperate* Folly that was the Cauſe of it? How dare we then talk of repenting *hereafter*, who cannot command one *Moment* of *future* Time, nor promiſe our ſelves one Day longer? when for all we know the hope of *Eternity* that is *now* in our hands may be loſt *for ever*, and drop through our fingers before to *Morrow* Morning; and we that lie down this Night, and ſleep ſecurely in our Sins, may before the next *Twilight* awake with Horror and Amazement in *Hell*? Bleſſed God! that ever any *reaſonable* Creatures ſhould be ſo ſtupified, to venture a *Soul* and an *everlaſting* Intereſt on ſo *great* an Uncertainty, and rather than begin his Repentance to day, run the hazard of being *eternally* miſerable to *morrow* Morning! that he who will not truſt his Gold one *hour* in the Poſſeſſion of a Thief, nor his

his Life one *minute* within the reach of a Lions *Paw*, ſhould abandon his *Soul* whole Months and Years together, to the Mercy of a Danger great enough to diſtract all the Wits of Mankind, did they but fully underſtand it! Let us therefore conſider that the *preſent* Time only is in our Power, and that as for the *future*, it is wholly in God's; ſo that while we *defer* our Repentance to the *future*, we do as it were *caſt* Lots for our *Souls*, and venture our *everlaſting* Hopes upon a Contingency that is not in our Power to diſpoſe of. For all we know, this may be the *Evening* of our *Day* of Tryal; and if it be, our *Life* and *Eternity* depends upon what we are now doing. Wherefore it highly concerns us, as we regard our own Safety, wiſely to manage this laſt Stake, the *winning* or *loſing* whereof, may prove our *making* or *undoing*.

3. Every *Delay* of our Repentance endangers the *forfeiture* of that Grace, without the Aſſiſtance whereof, we can never repent to purpoſe. For we can no more repent without God's Grace, than we can live without our Food. *No man can come to me*, ſaith our Saviour, *except the Father which hath ſent me draw him.* Joh. 6. 44. But ſince God hath promiſed, that if we *draw near to him, he will draw near unto us.* Jam. 4. 8. that if we *work out our own ſalvation, he will work*

in us to will, and to do. Philip. 2. 12. and that *he will give the holy Spirit unto every one that asks him.* Luke 11. 13. Since I ſay, God hath thus intailed his Grace upon our Endeavours, Repentance is within our Power, ſo long as that Grace is ſo; by which, if we do our Endeavour, we ſhall be enabled to it. He who can repent by the Grace of God, is able to repent ſo long as he is able to obtain his Grace to aſſiſt and concur with his Endeavours; but if he once withdraw his Grace, and give us over to our own Hearts Luſts, then are we no more able to repent by our own natural Strength and Power, than a *Clod* of Earth is to mount up to *Heaven,* and fix it ſelf a *glorious* Star in the Firmament: But all the time we do delay our Repentance, we are wearying out the Grace of God, which whilſt we are running away from God and our Duty, *follows* us with Importunities to return; but inſtead of complying with it, we ſtill defer to *liſten* to its Sollicitations, and put it off from time to time with *falſe* and *empty* Promiſes, what can be expected but that after ſo many defeats and diſappointments it ſhould at laſt *abandon* us to our ſelves, and leave us to the *miſerable* Fate of our own Folly and Madneſs: and if once it doth ſo, farewel to all the Hopes of our Recovery. Conſider therefore, O thou *vain* Man, that ſayſt thou wilt repent

repent *hereafter*; muſt thou command God to wait thy leiſure, or faſten his Grace with ſuch *adamantine* Chains as that it ſhould never be able to get looſe from thee? art thou ſure it will be always at thy Beck, or that notwithſtanding thy long Provocations, it will be ready to come in to thy aid whenſoever thou calleſt for its Aſſiſtance? for by promiſing to repent *hereafter*, thou doſt not only promiſe for thy ſelf, but for the Grace of God too, whoſe Aſſiſtance is as neceſſary to thy Repentance, as thy own Endeavour; and methinks 'tis a ſtrange piece of Confidence in thee, to promiſe for that which thou haſt ſo much diſobliged, and which upon that account thou haſt ſo little reaſon to truſt to. 'Tis true God hath promiſed you his Grace, but I beſeech you, where hath he promiſed that you ſhall have it when you pleaſe? or that after all his Tenders, and your ſcornful Refuſal of it, it ſhall be ſtill at your Choice whether you will at laſt accept of, or again refuſe it? for unleſs you can produce ſome ſuch Promiſe as this, you can have no reaſon to expect that God will ſtill continue his Grace to you, how long ſoever you refuſe and reject it: And if he ſhould at laſt deal by you, as you have dealt by him, this will be the *final* Iſſue, becauſe when he hath called, you have refuſed, when he hath ſtretched out his hand,

you have not regarded, but have ſet all his Counſels at naught, and would not hearken to his Importunities; therefore when you call, he will not anſwer, when you ſeek, he will not be found; but will even laugh at your Neceſſity, and mock when your *laſt* Extremity comes upon you. And ſhould things be reduc'd once to this *ſad* Iſſue, *woe* be to us that ever we were born.

4. And laſtly, Every Delay of our Repentance drives us nearer to the *laſt* Extremity, which is that of a *Death-bed* Repentance; and how great a one that is, I have already ſhewed you at large, and given you evident Proof, that tho' it be not abſolutely deſperate, yet it is moſt fearfully hazardous and comfortleſs; and yet this is the common Center to which all our *Delays* do naturally tend. We venture to ſin on, becauſe we know that if we do repent, God will have Mercy upon us, and ſo we do reſolve upon both; that is to ſin *now*, and to repent *hereafter*. And by this Train the Devil touls us on through all the Stages of Sin and Life, till we come to our *Death-bed*, and then when our Time and Strength is ſpent, we ſhall have all the Buſineſs of our Life to do, and being reduc'd to this Extremity, what a woful Condition ſhall we be in? when we ſhall feel our ſelves departing into a long Eternity of *Weal* or *Woe*, and have nothing

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to bear us company thither, but our Sins and Guilts, which, if they be not cancelled in an inſtant, will *conſign* us immediately to *endleſs* Miſery; and whether we look either within, without, or above us, ſhall be able to ſee nothing but a black and diſmal Cloud hanging over us, and Cauſes of Fear ſurrounding us on every ſide; how will our Heart *ſink* within us, and our Soul *quiver* on our Lips to think how *naked* and *harbourleſs* ſhe is left, having no other Refuge to fly to, now the *Avengers* of Blood are at her heels, but only that *wronged* and *affronted* Mercy which all her Life time ſhe ſpurned and trampled on? When we ſhall conſider what a vaſt Work we have to do, how little Time we have to do it in, how our own Strength is ſpent, and what little Reaſon we have to expect that God ſhould ſtrengthen us by a Miracle; in what a Tumult will our Souls be? how ſhall we quake and tremble to think whither we are going? and what will become of us for ever? Surely if we die in our Wits, and are not *Atheiſts* or *Sots*, it will be impoſſible for us to reflect on our ſelves and the fearful *Riſque* we are running, without extream Horror and Amazement. For we muſt be ſtrangely ſtupified, if when we perceive our ſelves upon the *Confines* of *Eternity*, within a very few Moments of being Happy or Miſerable for

ever, we do not awake from our Security; and if we do, the vaſtneſs of the Work that lies upon our Hands, the number of the Guilts that will *ſtare* us in the Face, and the little Time and Power we have to perform the *one* and expiate the *other*, muſt needs put our *guilty* Conſciences into a fearful Agony, and *unchain*, and let *looſe* all its Terrors upon us: And then how miſerable will our Condition be, when we ſhall look about for Comfort, and ſee nothing but God's *everlaſting* Threats ready to be fired and diſcharged upon us, and not one Promiſe opening a Door of Hope, nor any *Arm* of Mercy held forth to catch us now we are leaping down into *Eternity*; but *Hell* gaping for us as wide as our *Grave*, and both ready to receive a part of us, and our ſelves ready to divide our ſelves into thoſe Two *ſad* Habitations. O then ſhall we ſigh and lament our *Folly*, and curſe our *lingring* Delays, and wiſh a Thouſand and a Thouſand Times we had begun our Repentance ſooner. This is the *ſad* Extremity whereunto we are driving in every *Delay* of our Repentance; and conſidering all theſe Things, methinks theſe mighty Dangers whereunto our *Delays* expoſe us, ſhould be enough to frighten the moſt reſolute Sinner into *preſent* purpoſes of Amendment. And O would to God, that this might be the happy Effect

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of it! that Men at laſt would be but ſo wiſe as to conſider theſe things, how *monſtrouſly* Wicked, how *ſhamefully* Abſurd, how *fearfully* Dangerous it is for them to put off their Repentance; and that conſidering this they would be ſo kind to themſelves as now at laſt to betake themſelves to the Diſcipline of a ſevere Repentance. This I know is a Word that Men are extreamly frighted at, they think if once they betake themſelves to Repentance, they muſt encounter with *vaſt* Difficulties, and enter into a very *dolorous* and *unpleaſant* Courſe of Life, which while they can live merrily in their Sins, they are very loath to do. And indeed I cannot deny, but after an *habitual* Courſe of Sin, our Entrance into a *penitent* Life, will in all probability, be attended with a great deal of Sorrow and Diſquiet, but who can help this? it is you that have brought this Inconvenience on your ſelves by deferring your Repentance ſo long; and aſſure your ſelves, the longer you defer it, the more difficult it will be whenever you begin. But for God's ſake conſider *Sirs*, which do you think will be more uneaſie, to undergo the Severities of Repentance *for a Time*, or Hell Fire *for ever*; to weep for your Sins whilſt you have Hope of Mercy, to conteſt againſt them whilſt you have a Proſpect of Victory; or ſigh and groan for them to all

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Eternity, without any hope of Eaſe or Redemption; for whether you will or no, you muſt endure Repentance or Hell; and therefore ſince there is no other remedy, at leaſt be perſuaded to chooſe that which is moſt tolerable, and if you do ſo, I am ſure you muſt conclude, that 'tis infinitely eaſier to repent, than to be damned. But yet it is plain, that Men do commonly fancy Repentance to be much more grievous than it is; for could they once perſuade themſelves to reſolve upon the Work, and ſeriouſly to engage in it, they would find the greateſt part of the Trouble were over; for the main Difficulty of Repentance, lies in forming our firſt Reſolution; this indeed will exact great *Conſideration*, and vigorous *Struggling* with the wicked *Habits* and *Inclinations* of our own Natures; but when we have ſo far overcome our ſelves, as to obtain a full and clear Conſent and Reſolution, we have paſt the *main* brunt of our *ſpiritual* Warfare, and if we have but the Courage to keep our Ground, ſhall ſoon be crowned with the Joys of Victory, and that which ſeem'd at firſt ſo frightful, and terrible to us, will preſently grow tolerable, and ſoon after eaſie, and after that by degrees ſo pleaſant and delightful, that we ſhall prefer it before all the Pleaſures of Senſe, and feel our ſelves infinitely more

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bleſſed and happy in it, than ever we were in the midſt of the higheſt Raviſhments of our ſinful Delights. Come then, my Brethren, let us ſtand no longer *amuſing* our ſelves with the Difficulties, but let us ſeriouſly conſider the *indiſpenſible* neceſſity of it, the great Aſſiſtance God hath promiſed us if we will *ſpeedily* undertake it, and the *immenſe* Rewards he proffers to encourage us to it, and let us never leave preſſing our ſelves with theſe *Conſiderations*, till we have obtained of our ſelves a full and free conſent to it, and wrought our Wills into a *ſerious* and *hearty* Reſolution. And when we have prevailed thus far, we have gotten over the greateſt *Difficulty* that lies between us and *Heaven*, and if we do but vigorouſly purſue our Reſolution, our Work will every day grow *eaſier* and *eaſier*, and ſo at laſt it will be our Recreation, and we ſhall reap from it ſo much *Peace* of Conſcience, ſo much *Joy* in the Holy Ghoſt, ſuch a calm and ſweet Enjoyment of our ſelves, and ſuch a glorious Hope of a *future* bleſſed Immortality, as will carry us with unſpeakable Vigour through all the weary Stages of our Duty, till we are arrived to our Journeys end, where all the *Sorrows* of our Repentance ſhall be *ſwallowed* up in *everlaſting* Joys and Triumphs.

Luke

LUKE XXII. 42.

Nevertheleſs, not my Will, but thine be done.

THESE Words are a Part of our Saviour's Prayer in his Agony; in which his Soul being at preſent under a *mighty* Conteſt with the *Powers of Darkneſs*, and under a *vigorous* Apprehenſion of his approaching Paſſion on the Croſs, expreſſes an *earneſt*, but yet *natural* and *innocent* Deſire of Deliverance; *Father, if thou be willing*, ſaith he, *remove this Cup from me.* For his *Humanity* being *now* in a great meaſure deprived of the Supports and *comfortable* Influence of his *Divinity*, and left alone to grapple by its own *ſingle* Strength, with the *powerful* Malice of Men and Devils, and being under a *piercing* Senſe of thoſe *mighty* Evils they intended againſt him, began to *recoil* and *ſhrink*, out of a *natural* deſire to preſerve it ſelf; but yet this *natural* deſire being perfectly under the Government of his Reaſon, and that as perfectly under the Government of *God*, He does to this Effect *addreſs* himſelf to *God, Father, if it be thy Will, remove this Cup away from me. I do not deſire in the leaſt to controul or croſs thy bleſſed Will in any thing, no, rather than thou ſhouldſt ſuffer the leaſt Diſappoint-*

pointment in thy bleſſed Intentions, I am ready to undergo the utmoſt that the Malice of Men and Devils can inflict upon me; but alas! the Evils that I feel and fear are ſo exceeding grievous unto Fleſh and Blood, that if it might be without Contradiction to thy Will, or Prejudice to thy gracious Intentions to a ſinful World, I cannot but earneſtly deſire that they might be removed from me. But if there be any the leaſt Competition between thy Deſigns and my Deſires, ſo that they do not fairly agree, and perfectly conſiſt with one another, whatſoever I endure, not my Will, but thine be done.

Behold here a moſt *perfect* Pattern of Submiſſion to the Will of *God*, and that under the moſt *diſmal* and *difficult* Circumſtances. When he plainly ſaw it was the Will of his *Father* to expoſe him to the *utmoſt* Extremity of *humane* Miſery, to *object* his *naked* Breaſt to the *utmoſt* Malice of Men and Devils; when, by the Force of a moſt *powerful* Inſtinct, his Nature *recoiled* at the Apprehenſion of it, and would fain have been excuſed; then did he ſupplicate on his *bended* Knees, that his *Father* would not liſten to the *innocent* Language of his *natural* Fears and Deſires, but that he would fully execute his own *ſevere* and *terrible* Will upon him; *not my Will, O Father, i. e.* not the Will of my *natural* Fear and Deſire of Self-preſervation, *but thy Will be done; though it be to in-*

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flict on me the utmoſt Miſery that a poor Innocent, as I am, can be expoſed to. The Words being thus explained, do naturally reſolve themſelves into this Propoſition,

That God's *Choices* for us, are much better than *our own*, and conſequently, that if it were in *our* Power to determine which of the *Two* ſhould take Effect, it would be very *unreaſonable* not to chooſe what *God* hath choſe for us.

The Truth of which will evidently appear if we conſider theſe Two Things:

1. That *God* doth as really and heartily will what is *Good* for us, as we do for our ſelves.
2. That he knows much better what is *Good* for us than we.

1. That *God* doth as really and heartily will what is *Good* for us, as we do for our ſelves; *i. e.* So long as we are *proper* Objects of his *good* Will, and have not ſinned our ſelves into an *utter* Incapacity of being beloved by him; for then the Caſe quite alters, and that *good* Will which he formerly bore us, converts into a *ſevere* Reſolution of making us *dreadful* Examples to others, that ſo when through our own *Obſtinacy* and *Incorrigibleneſs* he can do no more good upon us, he may do good to *others* by us, and warn them not to imitate our Actions by the *fearful* Example of our Sufferings.

But

But ſo long as there is any Hope of doing good upon us, he declares himſelf as *heartily* inclined to do good to us, as ever any Man was to do good to himſelf; for what *mighty* Deſigns hath he ſet on foot? what *expenſive* Methods hath he uſed to ſave us? in what *paſſionate* Strains hath he expreſſed his *good* Will towards us, and with what *reſtleſs* Importunity doth he court us to be happy? He ſwears by his *own* Life, that he deſires not our Ruine, but rather that we ſhould *return* and *live*, and ſolemnly profeſſes, *that he would have all men to be ſaved, and to come to the Knowledge of the Truth.* And when with *all* his Courtſhips and Addreſſes he cannot prevail upon our Obſtinacy, to diſſwade us from ruining our ſelves, he puts *on* the Paſſions of a *mournful* Friend, and with *yearning* Bowels laments our *fatal* Folly; by all which *tender* Expreſſions he plainly declares, that he doth as heartily *will* our Welfare as we can do our own. But becauſe a *firm* Belief of this Principle is indiſpenſibly neceſſary to a *free* Submiſſion to his *heavenly* Will, I ſhall endeavour briefly to demonſtrate the Truth of it from theſe *Four* Conſiderations.

1. That *his* Intereſt in us is much *greater* than *ours* in our ſelves.
2. That his own *Self-love* doth as ſtrongly

ly incline him to *will* our *Good*, as *ours* doth to *will* our own.

3. That in concerning himſelf about us, he can have no *other* End to ſerve, than what we have in being concern'd for our ſelves.

4. That even that *good* Will that we bear to our ſelves, is only a Derivation from, and Participation of that infinite *good* Will which he bears us.

1. That *his* Intereſt in us is much *greater* than *ours* in our ſelves. If we believe *him* to be the Author of our *Beings*, we muſt acknowledge him to have a moſt *abſolute* and *unalienable* Propriety in us; that what we are, as well as what we have, we hold from him who is the *Head-Landlord* and *Supream Proprietor* of all thoſe *Beings* that are derived from him, even as *Brooks* and *Rivulets* owe all their Streams to the Fountain from whence they flow. And can we imagin him not to be *greatly* concern'd for what he hath ſo *great* an Intereſt in? or that he who hath ſo much *greater* Propriety in us, ſhould have *leſs* Regard for us than we have for our ſelves? Can it be thought that the *great* Father of Beings, ſhould be forgetful of his own *Off-ſpring*? that he who hath imprinted on all other Parents ſuch a *tender* Kindneſs toward their *natural* Iſſue, ſhould be ſo regardleſs of his *own*, as to expoſe them to a

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vide Wilderneſs, and leave them *there* to ſhift for themſelves? no, doubtleſs the *mighty* Intereſt he hath in us cannot but *indear* his Affections to us, and render him *mightily* concern'd for our welfare. *Can the Mother forget her ſucking Child, that ſhe ſhould not have Compaſſion on the Son of her Womb? ya, they may forget, but I will not forget thee ſaith the Lord.* Iſai. 49. 14. For ſince every thing is *naturally* inclined to love its own, we cannot but conclude that the *God* of Nature, from whom all *natural* Inclinations ſpring, hath in himſelf a moſt *tender* Regard for all that Family of Beings, of which he is the Parent; eſpecially conſidering

2. That *his* own *Self-love* doth as ſtrongly incline him to *will* our Good, as *ours* doth to *will* our own. For if he love himſelf as he cannot *but* do, being infinitely lovely; he muſt neceſſarily love what is like him, and affect to propagate his own Reſemblance. But no *miſerable* Thing can be like himſelf, who is *infinitely* happy; and therefore he cannot love to make *others* miſerable, ſince in ſo doing, he muſt affect to produce what is contrary to himſelf, which implies a *plain* Contradiction. For unleſs he love our Miſery, he cannot be *ſuppoſed* to deſire it, becauſe as I ſhall ſhew you by and by, himſelf can never be the better for it, and therefore if he deſire it, it muſt be for

its own ſake. But how is it poſſible that the ſame *Being* ſhould love Contraries at the ſame time; that he ſhould at once take Delight in himſelf, and in what is moſt unlike him, or, which is the ſame thing, that he ſhould be pleaſed with his own *Happineſs* and with our Miſery together. So that if he love himſelf who is *infinitely* happy, his own *Self-love* muſt neceſſarily incline him to *will* the *Happineſs* of others; and unleſs our *Happineſs* might be ſuppoſed to be prejudicial to his, which is impoſſible, it would be an Expreſſion of Hatred to himſelf to wiſh *ill* to his Creatures. In his willing *Miſery* in us, he would manifeſt himſelf to be *diſpleaſed* with his own *Happineſs*, and *openly* declare that *Miſery* was much more grateful to him; for how can he love *Miſery* for it ſelf, as he muſt needs do, if he take Pleaſure in ours, and at the ſame time love himſelf who is ſo *infinitely* happy? This therefore we may build upon, with as much Confidence, as upon any *firſt Principle* in *Philoſophy*, that God hath the ſame Reaſon to *will* our *Happineſs*, as we have to *will* our own; that as we would be happy, becauſe we love our ſelves; ſo becauſe he loves himſelf, he would have us be ſo. He loves that others ſhould be like him, even as every other Being doth that loves; for what he loves in *himſelf*, he muſt love in *another*, and that which he loves

loves in *another* where it is, he muſt love to propagate to *another* where it is not; and conſequently, as he muſt love our *Happineſs*, becauſe he loves his own, even ſo for the ſame Reaſon he muſt love to make us happy.

3. That in concerning himſelf about us, he can have no *other* End to ſerve, but what we have in being concern'd for our ſelves. He is ſo *infinitely* happy in himſelf, that he can neither conceive nor deſire any *Good* for himſelf, beyond what is contain'd within the *Immenſity* of his own *Being* and *Perfections*; ſo that now he can have no *Self-ends* to ſerve, becauſe he doth already enjoy all *poſſible* Degrees of Perfection and Happineſs, and ſo can deſire nothing without himſelf as an Addition to his own Beatitude, which is ſo *infinite* already that it will admit of *no* Increaſe. From hence therefore we may be aſſured that *he* can have no *other* Reaſon to concern himſelf about us, but only to do us *Good*, for to do us *Miſchief* cannot be his End, becauſe he can do himſelf no *Good* by it, his *Happineſs* being already *ſo* compleat, that it cannot poſſibly need our *Miſery* either to increaſe, or to ſerve as a *Foil* to it. 'Tis only *Want* and *Indigence* that make *one* Being deſire the Miſery of *another*. If I deſire to rob *another* of his *Happineſs*, 'tis to increaſe or to ſecure my own; if I deſire to make *another* miſerable, 'tis either to preſerve my

ſelf from being ſo, or to procure my ſelf that *ill-natur'd* Comfort of having a *Companion* in Miſery. But God by the *boundleſs* Happineſs of his Nature, is infinitely raiſed above all ſuch *mean* Conſiderations, and therefore cannot have any Temptation in his Nature to do *any* Thing but *Good* to his Creatures But doth not the *Scripture* tell us, *that he doth all things for his own Glory*, and that he obtains *this* End as well by *puniſhing* as by *rewarding* his Creatures? Very true, but then it is to be conſidered, that the *Glory* he aims at, conſiſts not in receiving of any *Good* from us, but in doing and communicating of all *Good* to us: For *infinite* Goodneſs can no otherwiſe be *glorified* than by its *own* Overflowings, and free Communications, and it can no otherwiſe be *glorified* in the Puniſhment of its Creatures, but only as it doth *Good* by it; for ſhould it puniſh without *good* Reaſon, it would reproach and vilifie it ſelf; but if it doth it for *good* Reaſon, it muſt be becauſe it is *good* either for it *ſelf* or *others*: for it *ſelf* it cannot be; for how can an *infinitely* happy Being reap any *Good* from *anothers* Miſery? and therefore it muſt be for the good of others, either to reduce *thoſe* who are puniſhed, or to warn *others* by their Example from running away from their Duty and Happineſs. So that to do *Good*, is the End of God's Puniſh-

Puniſhment, and becauſe it is ſo, he is *glorified* by it; and conſidering that he is ſo *infinitely* happy, that he can no ways ſerve himſelf by our Miſeries, it is impoſſible he ſhould have any other End in concerning *himſelf* about us, but only that *great* and *God-like* one of doing us good, and making us happy. For the very Notion of an End includes *Good*; and therefore ſince the End of God's Concern about us, cannot be his *own* Good, it muſt neceſſarily be *ours*.

4. And laſtly, That even that *good* Will that we bear to our ſelves, is only a Derivation from, and Participation of that *infinite* good Will which God bears us. For it is plain, that our *natural* Inſtincts, and Propenſions, muſt be derived from the *ſame* Fountain with our Natures, and conſequently that God is the *Author* of both; and if ſo, then that *unquenchable* Self love, and Thirſt after Happineſs, which is implanted in *our* Natures, muſt needs be derived from him, and owe its *Original* to ſome *overflowing* Spring of Love and Benevolence in his Boſom. For what ſhould move him ſo to contrive the Frame of our Natures, as that we cannot but love our ſelves and breath after our own Happineſs, but only his own *good* Will to us, and *tender* Care of our Happineſs? What *other* End could he propoſe to himſelf, in ſtamping this *vehement* Propen-

ſon in our Natures, *only* to excite us by it to be careful of our ſelves, and to purſue our *own* Intereſts? Doubtleſs if he had not loved us *more* than we love our ſelves, he would never have cauſed us to love our ſelves as we do, ſince he could have no other aim in cauſing us to do ſo, but only to oblige us to *befriend* our ſelves, and contribute all we are able to our own Welfare. And ſince it was out of *mere* Love to us that he made us to love our ſelves, and our *own* ſelf-love is nothing elſe but a *Ray* and *Participation* of his Benevolence towards us, we may be ſure it is *purer* in the Fountain than it can be in the Channel, that it is much more *intenſe* and *vigorous* in his Boſom than in our own. For as the *natural* Love of all Parents towards their *Off-ſpring* is a plain Inſtance of the *indulgent* Care which the *great Father* of Beings hath for *all* his Children, that he hath committed them in their Infancy to ſuch *tender* Nurſes as will be ſure to take care of them when they cannot provide for themſelves; that he hath not intruſted them to the Compaſſion and *good* Nature of other Beings, to be maintained by the Alms and Benevolence of their *fellow Creatures*, but hath taken ſecurity for their *liberal* Nurture and Education from the *inmoſt* Bowels of their Parents; ſo that *vehement* Propenſion of Self-love which God

God hath implanted in us is a moſt *genuine* Signature and Impreſſion of his Benevolence towards us, and ſhews how careful he was of us thus to take ſecurity of our ſelves for our *own* Welfare, and to oblige us to be happy by the moſt *tender* and *vigorous* Paſſion in our Natures. By all theſe conſiderations I think it is as clear as the Sun that *God* doth heartily loves us, and hath as *unfeigned* a *good-Will* for us, as we can have for our ſelves; ſo that unleſs we can ſuppoſe that we are better able to chuſe for our ſelves than he, we have at leaſt as much Reaſon to acquieſce in *his* Choices for us as in our *own*. It is plain he is as much our Friend as our ſelves, and therefore tho' what he *wills* and *chooſes* for us may in ſome particulars appear very *harſh* and *ſevere*, yet that his Intention is *good*, and that he means as well towards us as we can towards our ſelves; and therefore if in the Event it prove not as well for us as our *own* contrary Will and Choice would have done, we may be ſure that it was not want of *good* Will to us, but for want of Skill to chooſe what was beſt for us. But if it appear that he doth not only wiſh as *well* to us as we do to our ſelves, but alſo that he knows how to chooſe for us a great deal *better* than we, then we have all the Reaſon in the world to acquieſce in his Choices how *grievous* ſoever

they may appear to us, and to joyn heartily with our *Saviour* in this *excellent* Petition, *not our wills, O Father, but thy Will be done.* Which brings me to

2. The ſecond general Head of diſcourſe, that as God hath as *good* a Will to us as we have to our ſelves, ſo he knows much *better* what is *Good* for us than we. And to prove the Truth of this it is ſufficient that God *infinitely* exceeds us in Knowledge and Underſtanding, he being *Omniſcient*, and having all Things before him in one *intire* View and Proſpect, whereas *we ſee but in part, and know but in part*, and are extremely *ſhallow* and *ſuperficial* in our Conceptions of thoſe Things that lye before us, which muſt neceſſarily render us *infinitely* leſs capable of judging what is *Good* for our ſelves than he. And this will more plainly appear by *particular* Inſtances, of which I ſhall only produce theſe five:

1. That we many times know only what is *Good* for our ſelves *ſingly*, but God knows what is *Good* for us as we are *Parts* of the *Whole*, and in Conjunction with it.
2. We many times know only what is *Good* for us with reſpect to ſuch a *particular* End, but God knows what is *Good* for us in the *main*.

3. We

3. We many times know only *this* or *that* to be *Good* for us *ſingly* and *apart* by it ſelf, but God knows whether it be *Good* for us in Conjunction with thoſe *Concomitants* and *Conſequents* that are neceſſary to it.
4. We many times know only what is *Good* for us in reſpect to our *preſent* Temper and Diſpoſition, but God knows what is *Good* for us in Reference to our *conſtant* and moſt *abiding* Diſpoſition.
5. We many times know what is *Good* for us with reſpect to this *preſent* State of Things, but God knows what is *Good* for us in Reference to our *eternal* Condition. In all which Inſtances I doubt not to make it appear that God is much fitter to chooſe for us, than we for our ſelves.

1. That we many times know only what is *Good* for our ſelves *ſingly*, but God knows what is good for us as we are *Parts* of the *Whole*, and in Conjunction with it. Man is naturally a *ſociable* Creature, and as *ſuch* can never be happy alone. His Muſick is always beſt in *Conſort*; when it conſiſts of *numerous* Voices, every one bears a Part with every one. And ſince our Nature is ſuch, as that we are not comparably ſo well pleaſed with *ſolitary* as with *ſociable* Fruitions,

ons, it is every *ſingle* Mans Intereſt that his own *private Good* ſhould not be ſeperated from the *Good* of the *Whole*; that it ſhould not grow like a *Wen* by ingroſſing the Nouriſhment that is due to all the *other* Parts, but riſe and increaſe in ſuch *juſt* Proportions as is conſiſtent with the Happineſs of all the Reſt: and there is no man whatſoever that hath the *leaſt* Spark of Generoſity in him, but to contribute to a *Publick Good* would joyfully ſubmit to a great many *private* Inconveniences, and would reckon his own *perſonal* Dammage fairly compenſated by the Advantage that the *Publick* receives by it. But ſo *narrow* and *confined* is our Proſpect of things, that in our *private* Choices we many times ignorantly ſeperate our own Intereſt from the *Publick's*, and chooſe *that* for *our ſelves*, which, ſhould we obtain, would *prove* very *injurious* to the *Whole*. We would fain change our *preſent* Condition for ſome *other* which we have Reaſon to believe would be much more advantagious to us; but ſhould we obtain our Deſire, it may be the *Publick* would be much *more* injured by it, than *our ſelves* could be benefited. Perhaps we are fitteſt to do *Good* in our *preſent* Station, or, ſhould we remove, ſome *unworthy* Perſon may get *in* in our Room, or *ſome* Perſon that is *more worthy* than our ſelves may be diſplaced by us;

us; and by a thouſand other ways which we are not able to comprehend, our *ſhifting* of Places may ſo *puzzle* and *diſorder* the *well-laid* ſcene of Affairs, that had we foreſeen it at firſt we ſhould much rather have choſen to keep where we are. Again, we lye under the ſenſe or Apprehenſion of ſome *great* Calamity, and doubtleſs if we might *chooſe* for *our ſelves* we would immediately be delivered from it; but did we always *foreſee* how much Good *others* may reap from our Sufferings, how much our *private* Infelicity may conduce to the *Weal* of the *Publick*, I hope we ſhould not be ſuch *narrow-ſpirited* Perſons as for the ſake of our *preſent* Eaſe to neglect ſo fair an Opportunity of being *publick* Benefactors to the World. But now God hath ſuch an *intire* Proſpect of all Things before him, that he plainly ſees all the *little* Claſhings and Interferings of Mens *private* with the *Publick Good*. And as he knows that we *cannot* be *happy* alone, ſo he reſolves that we *ſhall* not; for he never wiſhes any Mans *private* Good ſeparately from that of the *Publick*, but in one *ſteady* Drift he carries on the Intereſt of each *ſingle* Part in Conjunction with the Intereſt of the Whole. And hence in the Proſecution of *ſingle* Ends we ſee he is not always wont to proceed in the moſt *direct* and *compendious* Way, but often times winds about in a *large* Circuit,

in

in which he infolds and takes in a thouſand *concurrent* and *ſubordinate* Deſigns; and drives them all at once before him in the *Courſe* and *Series* of his Providence. And tho' in this *general* Drift of Things, the Concerns of *particular* Men are ſometimes ſet *forwards*, and ſometimes *backwards*, in Purſuance of the *main* Deſign; yet all at laſt conſpires in the *publick Good*, whereof each *Particular* hath a ſhare. And therefore tho' for a *publick Good* we ſome times ſuffer a *preſent* Inconvenience, yet ſince we cannot be *happy* but in Society, it is much better for us that we ſhould be *dammaged* than the *Publick*; becauſe the Happineſs of each *particular* Member redounds from the Welfare of the *whole* Society, and is neceſſarily involved in it: And did we but rightly underſtand our *own* Intereſt, we ſhould never eſteem any Thing *Good* for our ſelves that is a *Nuiſance* to the *Publick*, becauſe whatſoever *this* ſuffers, I and *every* Man ſuffer; and unleſs I could be happy alone, *that* can never be for my Intereſt in *particular* that is againſt my Intereſt in *common*. Since therefore the Happineſs of every *Part* is included in that of the *Whole*, and conſequently whatſoever promotes the *Publick Good* is beneficial to each *particular* Member; it hence neceſſarily follows that God can chooſe much better for us than we. For whereas generally

generally our Foreſight is limited within the narrow *Horizon* of our own *particular* Concerns, by reaſon whereof we cannot many times avoid chooſing againſt the *common* Intereſt, God hath the whole *ſeries* of Things before him, and ſo muſt neceſſarily ſee even from the Beginning to the End what is for the *publick* Intereſt and what not; and therefore ſince he who is *ſole* Adminiſtrator of the *publick* Bank of *humane* Intereſt knows how to make the *beſt* Improvement of it, it is doubtleſs much *more* advantagious for us that he ſhould manage all our *particular* Shares of it, then that we ſhould reaſſume them into our own Hands, and manage them ſeparately by themſelves: And tho under *his* Conduct and Management we ſuffer ſome *preſent* Inconveniences, yet ſo long as we are ſure of *this*, that the *Publick Good* requires it and is promoted by it, we have all the Reaſon in the world to be ſatisfied. And this was the Caſe in the Text; the Inconvenience which our *bleſſed* Lord did *here* ſo earneſtly deprecate was indiſpenſibly neceſſary for the *Commonweal* of Men, in which himſelf had a large Share, being a *Member* of the *Corporation* of Mankind; ſo that had *God* granted his Deſire, and excuſed him *that* bitter Cup he drank, not only Mankind in *general* but himſelf in *particular*, as he was a Man, would have been very much damnified by it; for he would

would have been deprived of thoſe *Felicities* which he *now* injoys in *common* with us as he is the *Head* of a *glorious* Church, whom he redeemed and purchaſed with his Blood. He would have fallen *ſhort* of that *Mediatorial* Dignity to which he is now advanced, and loſt the Satisfaction of being the Author of our Happineſs, and ſeeing the *bleſſed* Fruits of the *Travail* of his Soul; by all which he hath been aboundantly compenſated for thoſe *momentary* Sufferings he indured. So that in the Iſſue we ſee it was *well* for *him* as well as for *us* that the Will of *God* took place, his own *perſonal* Share in the *common* Happineſs of Men being enough to recompenſe him a *thouſand* Fold for whatſoever he ſuffered to procure it. Upon this Account therefore it is beſt that *God* ſhould chooſe for us, becauſe he always chooſes what is *Good* for us in conjunction with the *Publick*, in the Proſperity whereof all our *particular* Welfare is involved.

2. We many times only know what is *Good* for us with reſpect to ſuch a *particular* End, but God knows what is good for us in the *main*. The Generality of Men we ſee are ſo *raſh* and *precipitant* in the Purſuit of their *particular* Ends, that they commonly overlook thoſe Things that are of more *general* and *Catholick* Concern to them, and run themſelves upon a *thouſand* Inconveniences for the ſake of ſuch *particular*

lar Goods as can never make them any reaſonable Amends. Thus in our *worldly* Affairs, how often do we indanger our *main* Intereſt by ſnatching *too* greedily at ſome *preſent* Good? We think if we had it, it would ſerve *ſuch* a Purpoſe and conduce to *ſuch* a *deſired* End; but when we have it, it proves a Miſchief to us, and diſappoints us of other Ends and Purpoſes which are of much *greater* Weight and Moment to us: And I believe there is no Man that hath been but a *diligent* Obſerver of his *own* Affairs, but hath found by Experience, that *many* of thoſe Things which for *ſuch* or *ſuch* Purpoſes he hath earneſtly coveted, have proved in the *main* extremely prejudicial to him; that either his *Health* or his *Eſtate*, his *Peace* or his *Reputation*, which are the main Ingredients of our *temporal* Welfare, hath been very much impaired by the Acquiſition of ſome of thoſe *Goods* which he hath moſt impatiently longed for. And how often have we ſeen Men *impoveriſhed* by thoſe Pleaſures, *diſquieted* by thoſe Profits, made *infamous* by thoſe Honours, and *unhealthful* by that Eaſe which they have doated on, and purſued with the greateſt Impatience? So fond are we generally of our *little particular* Ends, that in the proſecution of them we ſeldom conſult our *main* Intereſt! we conſider only that *this* or *that* Good will ſerve *this* or *that* Purpoſe,

Purpoſe, and ſo we immediately let fly our Deſires and Endeavours after that, without ever inquiring whether it will not be more *prejudicial* to us in general, than it can be beneficial in *this* or *that* particular; in which Caſe if we had but our own Wills, we ſhould many times ruin our ſelves for Trifles, and ſacrifice all the Happineſs of our Lives to the *preſent* gratification of ſome *fond* and *unreaſonable* Deſire. But now God in the Conduct and Management of our Affairs conſiders our *whole* Caſe, and hath *all* our Circumſtances together in his View, and ſo cannot but know whether *this* or *that* particular *Good* be conſiſtent with our Welfare in the general; and whereas we, like Men in a *Fever*, do for our *preſent* Eaſe and Refreſhment oftentimes long moſt impatiently for what is moſt *hurtful* and *injurious* to us, God, like a wiſe *Phyſitian*, conſults our *future* Health more than our *preſent* Eaſe, and having an *infallible* Proſpect of our *whole* Caſe and Circumſtances, ſuits all his Preſcriptions to the Neceſſities of our Condition, and not to the *blind* Impatiencies of our Appetites and Longings. He many times plainly ſees that what we deſire would be our *Bane*; and therefore out of *tender* Mercy chooſes rather to deny us than to deſtroy us. That *Patient* would be accounted very *unreaſonable* that ſhould fall out with his

his *Phyſitian* for diſturbing his ſleep when he is inclining to a *Lethargy*, or denying him Drink in a *Fever* or a *Dropſy*; becauſe tho' what he deſires is *good* for thoſe *particular* Ends of his preſent Eaſe and Refreſhment, yet it is apparently *deſtructive* to him in the main. Thus doubtleſs it would have been very well for *Joſeph*, as to many particular Ends, not to have been *ſold* by his Brethren, or *impriſoned* in *Egypt*, and doubtleſs had it been left to *his* own Option, he would much rather have choſen to continue at Home under the Care and Patronage of an *indulgent* Father; but had he ſeen, as *God* did, from the *firſt* Link of the Chain of his Fate to the *laſt*, and how inſeparably his *After-advancement* was connected to his *preſent* ſufferings, in the Courſe and Series of Things; he would doubtleſs have willingly choſen as *God* did for him, ſince tho' the *contrary* had been well for him in ſome particulars, yet *this* was much better in the general.

3. We many times know only *this* or *that* to be good for us *ſingly* and *apart* by it ſelf, but *God* knows whether it be good for us in Conjunction with thoſe *Concomitants* and *Conſequents* that in the Courſe of Things are neceſſary to it. For the *divine* Providence, which runs thro' all Things, hath diſpoſed and connected them into ſuch a *Series* and

Order, that there is no *ſingle* Event or Accident, (but what is purely *miraculous*) that depends not on the *Whole*, and hath *innumerable* Cauſes antecedent to it, *innumerable* Concurrences going hand in hand with it, and *innumerable* Conſequents attending it. But ſo *narrow* and *confined* is our Proſpect of Things, that we only ſee that part of their *Series* and Order that is at preſent before us; and there are *innumerable* Things both concomitant and conſequent to every Event that are out of the *ſphere* of our Cognizance; by Reaſon of which it is impoſſible for us to make any *infallible* judgment either of the *good* or *evil* of almoſt any *Event* that befals us; becauſe, tho' we may be ſecure that ſuch an Event *ſingly* and *apart* by it ſelf may be *good* or *evil* for us, yet for all we know, in the *whole* ſeries of Things there be ſuch *concomitant* or *conſequent* Events inſeparable to it, as may quite alter its Nature, and render *that* Evil which conſidered *ſingly* may be Good for us; or *that* good, which conſidered *ſingly* may be evil. So that in our Choice of Events we are neceſſitated for the moſt part to chooſe in the *dark*, becauſe we ſee *ſo* little of the *whole* Series of Things, and of the Circumſtances wherewith Events are accompanied and attended, that it is not in our Power to determine which is *good* or which *bad* for us. We many times look

look on ſuch an Event as *highly* good for us and *extremely* deſirable, and believe that if we could compaſs it we ſhould be *extremely* happy; but *poor, ſhort-ſighted* Creatures that we are! we *ſee* neither the Company, nor the Train of it. If *this* Event doth befal us, according to the Series of Things, a *thouſand others* muſt, and what they will prove we are not able to *prognoſticate*, and for all we know the Miſchief of *them* may abundantly outweigh the Benefit of *this*: and did we but foreſee all that goes along with and all that muſt follow it, we ſhould be many times *moſt* afraid of what we *moſt* eagerly deſire. This therefore being our Caſe, how extremely unfit are we to make Choices for our ſelves, ſince it is almoſt an *equal Lay* whether what we chooſe will prove our *Food* or our *Poiſon*. But *God* being the *ſupreme* Orderer and Diſpoſer of Things, muſt needs have them altogether *intirely* in his View; and having the firſt Link of the whole Chain of Cauſes in his own Hands cannot but plainly ſee all the *intermediate* ones from the Beginning to the End. And ſince his *Power* is the Cauſe not only of all *actual* Events but even of the Poſſibility of thoſe that ſhall never be actual, he muſt needs diſcern the *utmoſt* Iſſues of every *poſſible* as well as *actual* Event, and ſee the *remoteſt* Effects and Conſequents that are in the *Wombs* of all *actual* and *poſſible* Cauſes

and Principles; and having all Things that *are*, or that may *be* in his View, he doth not only ſee what is *good* or *hurtful* to us, but what would be ſo if it were *actual* and *exiſting*. So that He needs not try Experiments upon us to know what is *beneficial* or *injurious* to us, becauſe the Operation and Conſequence of every *poſſible* Event is as obvious to his *all-comprehending* Knowledge *before* as *after* it is befallen us. And hence it is impoſſible for him to be miſtaken in his Choices; becauſe he knows as well before hand what Things would *be* if they were, as what they *are* when they actually exiſt. And tho' we may ſometimes pervert the Natures of Things by our Abuſe of them, and make that *Evil* to us which is really *Good*; yet *God* cannot be miſtaken ſo as to preſcribe us for *Phyſick* what is in its own Nature *Poiſon*; and conſequently if he love us but as *well* as we love our ſelves, as I have demonſtrated he doth, he muſt needs chooſe better for us than we; becauſe he ſees the *utmoſt* Conſequents of all that doth or can befal us, and ſo cannot be impoſed on by ſhews and *falſe* Appearances as we often times are. And of this I ſhall only give you one Inſtance, which is that of good old *Jacob* when he loſt his Son *Joſeph*, which we plainly ſee by the Sorrow he expreſſed at it was an Accident that happened *ſore* againſt his Will, and which he would

would have gladly prevented had he been but aware of it. But it is plain the *good* Man ſaw but a *little* Way into the Series of Things; he ſaw his Loſs, but he ſaw not the *Iſſues* of it, for doubtleſs had he beheld that Train of *happy* Conſequents that was *chained* and *annexed* to it, how it tended not only to *Joſephs* Advancement but to the Preſervation of *himſelf* and *his* Family from the *enſuing* Famin, he would doubtleſs have been more a Friend to *himſelf* and a Father to *his* Family than to have *countervoted* God in his Choice and Election for him. But it was well for *Jacob* that *God* ſaw farther into the Conſequents of Things than he; for if he had not, not only *Joſeph* had miſſed of his Preferment, but *himſelf* and all *his* Family had been in a great *deal* of Danger of *periſhing* in the Famin. So that when all is done, you ſee the *wiſeſt* Courſe we can take is to *reſign* up our ſelves into the Hands of *God*, who ſeeing the *utmoſt* Iſſues and Conſequents of Things can never be miſtaken in chooſing what is *beſt* for us.

4. We many times know only what is *Good* for us with reſpect to our *preſent* Temper and Diſpoſition, but *God* knows what is *good* for us in Reference to our *conſtant* and moſt *abiding* Condition. We are a *Sort* of Creatures that are extremely *fickle* and *immutable*, our Humours change upon every *new* Occaſion, and our Deſires, like

the *Weather-cocks* look *contrary* Ways upon every *contrary* Wind; *now* we are of *one* Mind, and *by and by* of *another*: *this* ſeems to us *now*, and *anon* the *quite contrary*, and often times in the *ſame* Hour we are *ſeveral* Sorts of Men. But ſtill we chooſe according to our *preſent* Temper, and ſo ſtill as *this* alters, our *later* Choices thwart and run a *Tilt* at our *former*. So that ſhould every Thing happen to us that we deſire and wiſh for, we ſhould be the moſt *miſerable* Creatures in the World, ſince what we chooſe in *this* Hour we ſhould reject in the *next*, and what we longed for *to Day* we ſhould be ſick of *to Morrow*. And ſince no Man certainly knows *now* what mind he ſhall be of *anon*, for all that he can tell, *that* which is moſt agreeable to him *now* may be moſt diſagreeable to him *then*, and if he ſhould change his *preſent* Mind, as it is very likely he may, he will *immediately* unwiſh what he now wiſhes for, and *dearly* repent of what he moſt heartily chooſes. How then is it poſſible that we ſhould chooſe *well* and *wiſely* for our ſelves, all whoſe Choices do depend on a Temper that is ſo everlaſtingly *fickle* and *variable*? But now *God*, who foreſees what our moſt *conſtant*, *laſting*, and *durable* Temper will be, is much better able to *adapt* Events to it, and to contrive all our Circumſtances into a *fair* Accommodation with it; and tho' it is impoſſible but he muſt ſometimes

times croſs us, becauſe our *Humours* do ſo vary, and we do ſo *often* croſs and contradict our ſelves; yet knowing beſt what our *ſtanding* and *permanent* Temper will be, he muſt needs know beſt alſo what will be moſt *conſtantly* convenient for us and agreeable to us. For if he be *cordially* our Friend, as it is apparent he is, he will not ſo much conſult the Gratification of our *peeviſh*, *fickle*, and *unconſtant* Humours, as of our moſt *permanent* Temper and Diſpoſition; and if he know much better than we what our moſt *permanent* Temper and Diſpoſition will *be*, as it is apparent he doth, he muſt *needs* be much abler to ſuit and accommodate it with *convenient* Events and Circumſtances. Of this you have a *remarkable* Inſtance in the *Method* of *Gods* conducting *Iſrael* out of *Egypt* into *Canaan*. Doubtleſs had *They* had their own Choice, they would have been *immediately* tranſlated from their *miſerable* Bondage into that *happy* Land; but *God* knew their *ſtanding* Temper *better* than they did their own; he ſaw they were a *ſtupid*, *ſtubborn*, and *untractable* People, and as yet *wholly* uncapable of ſuch a *propitious* Change, and that if he had conducted them into *Canaan directly* and in a *Moment*, they would have preſently forgot their Benefactor, and let *looſe* themſelves to all Licentiouſneſs and Wickedneſs; which muſt have naturally ſhortned their Proſperity and haſtned it in-

to an *untimely* Ruin: And therefore *God* ſaw it neceſſary to continue them ſome time longer in *Egypt*, that ſo by his *mighty* Works *there* he might awaken their *ſtupid* Minds into an *awful* Senſe of his Majeſty and Power. And when by his *outſtretched* Arm he had brought them out of *Egypt*, he made them wander about *Forty Years* in the Wilderneſs; whereas had he led them directly *on*, a very *few* Days Marches would have brought them into *Canaan*. But he conſidered their *ſtubborn* Temper which was not yet capable to bear a *proſperous* Condition, till it was throughly diſciplined for it in the *School* of Affliction; till it was *broken*, and *tamed*, and *civilized*, and rendered more tractable and obſequious. And tho' in *thus* Dealing with them, he acted quite contrary to their *preſent* Humour and Deſires, yet did he act moſt advantageouſly for them, conſidering their *ſtanding* Genius and Temper; for had he tranſmitted them into *Canaan* with all thoſe *barbarous* Conditions that they brought out of *Egypt*, their Proſperity would have only *heightned* their Inſolence and haſtned their Ruin: And accordingly *Deuter.* 8. *Moſes* tells them at large, that all *Gods* Severities to them in the *Wilderneſs* were to diſpoſe them for the *happy* condition of *Canaan*; to *prove* and *poliſh* them, to *break* and *humble* their *untractable* Spirits, and do them *good* in the *latter* End; as you may

ſee

ſee verſe 2, 3, 5, 16. And if *God* chooſe to do what is beſt for us with reſpect to our *ſtanding* Temper and Diſpoſition, we have no reaſon to complain that he *ſometimes* croſſes our more *fickle* and *variable* Humours and Fancies.

5. And laſtly, We many times know only what is *Good* for us with reſpect to this *preſent* State of Things, but God knows what is *Good* for us in reference to our *eternal* Condition. For we being a Sort of Creatures that are born to live *for ever* in *eternal* Weal or Woe, it is really a Matter of very *ſmall* Moment to us whether we are *happy* or *miſerable* here; 'tis no more than a *ſhort* Nights Dream of Pain or Pleaſure to a Man that hath *fourſcore* or a *hundred* years to conſume in Delights or Torments: and when we *awake* in *Eternity* all that is paſt will ſeem a Dream to us in the Preſence of thoſe *never ending* Ages of *Joy* or *Miſery* before us. But yet ſo *fond* are we generally of the *preſent*, that we moſt commonly chooſe without *any* Regard to the *future*. In our Choice of Objects we ſeldom project beyond our *preſent* Pleaſure; if the Thing will but pleaſe us *now*, we rarely trouble our Heads to inquire what Influence it may have on our *eternal* Pleaſure or Pain; yea, and many times if we ſhould, it would be to no purpoſe; becauſe in moſt of thoſe

Goods

Goods we chooſe and covet there are a *thouſand* Snares we cannot diſcern, as well as a *thouſand* Advantages which we are not aware of. In thoſe Evils and Calamities which we run *away* from, we are not able to *foreſee* how many Ways our ſouls may be indangered by thoſe *outward* Goods we covet, nor yet how many *ſpiritual* Bleſſings thoſe *outward* Evils may be pregnant with at which we are ſo ſtartled and affrighted: ſo that in moſt of *our* Choices we can look no farther than our *preſent* Convenience, but what Effect they may have upon our *everlaſting* Fate we can never certainly know till the *Event* hath determined it. Thus in this *great Lottery* of *Goods* and *Evils* we *ſhort-ſighted* Creatures are fain to chooſe at a Venture, and till the *Event* hath determined what our Choices are, we know not whether they are *Blanks* or *Prizes*. So that if we always had what we chooſe, *God* only knows the Miſchief that would follow upon it; for to be ſure every Man would chooſe to be *proſperous*, and if every Man were ſo, how many *Thouſands* would periſh *for ever* for want of the *ſaving* Remedy of Affliction, which is as *indeſpenſibly* neceſſary to the reclaiming of *ſome* Perſons and putting them into a Capacity of Happineſs, as *Food* is to ſatisfy our Hunger, or *Nouriſhment* to ſuſtain our Lives. Lord! what

miſerable

miſerable Creatures then ſhould we be, ſhouldſt thou be ſo regardleſs of us as to allow us our Wills, who having ſo *ſmall* a Proſpect beyond *this* State of Things ſhould many times for the ſake of a *preſent* Convenience chooſe what might occaſion our *eternal* Woe? But *God* being our *beſt* Friend muſt needs be ſuppoſed to intend our *main* Intereſt, which being lodged in our *eternal* State, he muſt needs be much *more* concerned *about* than about our Happineſs and Conveniencies in this *preſent* Condition; nor indeed would he be *our* Friend ſhould he advance our *preſent* Intereſts to the Prejudice of our Souls and *immortal* Concerns. So that if he love us, as we are *moſt* ſure he doth, the *main* Drift and Deſign of his Providence over us muſt *be* to ſecure our Happineſs in the *World to come*; and when *this* cannot be ſecured but by the Damage of our *earthly* Enjoyments, it is Mercy and Kindneſs to us to fling that *Lumber* over-board to ſave our *precious* and *immortal* Fraight. But he having a moſt *perfect* Intuition of the *inmoſt* Nature and *utmoſt* Conſequents of Things, cannot but diſcern all thoſe Stops and Turnings where our *temporal* and *eternal* Intereſts do claſh and interfere with one *another*; and having a *perfect* Inſight of all their Competitions, where the *one* cannot be advanced without the Depreſſion of the

other,

other, he muſt needs know *infinitely* better than we how to prefer our *main* Intereſt, and to chooſe what is beſt for us. For he knowing *beſt* what our Temper is, and what the Conſequents of things are cannot be *ignorant* of what is *beſt* for us and moſt *conducive* to our *eternal* Intereſt; whether *Proſperity* or *Adverſity* be *ſafeſt* for our Souls, and moſt for the Security of our *Vertue* and *Innocence*; and knowing this he can ſo accomodate *all* Events to our *ſpiritual* Neceſſities, as that they ſhall *all* work together for our *eternal* Good. And if at any time he ſees it *neceſſary* for our *ſpiritual* Good to *inſtruct* us by Rods, or to *diſcipline* us by Affliction, it is *infinite* Mercy in him to croſs our *blind* Wills by interrupting our *beloved* Eaſe and Proſperity. And if *we* ſaw but what *he* ſees when he corrects and chaſtiſes us, and knew the Reaſons of his Actions; we ſhould doubtleſs beſeech him to do as he doth, and whilſt we were *ſmarting* under his Laſhes, we ſhould be *adoring* his Goodneſs for making ſuch *wiſe* Proviſion for our Welfare. Thus when *David* was hunted like a *Partridge* on the Mountains by thoſe *ſucceſſive* Afflictions which *God* let fly at him, he doubtleſs concluded himſelf to be very ſeverely dealt with, and would *God* but have allowed him to chooſe his *own* Fate, he would much rather have choſen to have lived

in

in an *uninterrupted* Calm of Proſperity, than to be expoſed, as he was, to the *inceſſant* Storms of an *adverſe* Fortune. But when Experience had better inſtructed him what were the Reaſons of *God*'s Actions, how neceſſary they were to *correct* his Follies, and *curb* the Extravagancies of his Nature; he was then plainly convinced that *God* had dealt much better by him, than he would have dealt by himſelf, and was forced to acknowledge that it was *well* for him that he was afflicted; *for before I was afflicted*, ſaith he, *I went aſtray*; *But now I have kept thy Commandments*. Pſal. 119. 67.

So that by all theſe Inſtances you plainly ſee that *God* can chooſe much *better* for us than we for our ſelves, and therefore if to *this* you add what hath been ſo largely proved, that he is as *heartily* our Friend as we can be our own, it will from hence *neceſſarily* follow that it is much *better* for us, that *his* Will concerning us ſhould take Effect, than any *contrary* Will or Deſire of *our own*.

What then remains, but that with *all* Chearfulneſs and Alacrity we reſign up our ſelves into the Hands of *God*, and ſubmit *all* our Choices and Deſires to his *heavenly* Will; *who* having as *unfeigned* an Affection for us, as we can have for our ſelves, and a much *better* Proſpect of our Affairs than *we*, muſt needs manage our Concerns to much

greater

greater Advantage than it is poſſible for us to do. Why then ſhould we *murmure* and *repine* at any thing that befalls us? are we *wiſer* than *God*? no; or can we pretend to be *more* careful of our *Intereſt* than he is? neither. In the Name of *Goodneſs*, what would we be at then? Would we have him reſign *up* our Concerns to our ſelves, and not intermeddle any farther in our Affairs? God forbid, that either *he* ſhould have ſo *little* Regard of us, or that *we* ſhould be ſuch Traytors to our own Intereſt. For on this ſide *Hell* I know nothing more *formidable* than for *God* to let us *alone*, and give us *up* to our own Wills and Deſires. And if I ſhould hear him *thus* beſpeaking me from the *Battlements* of Heaven, *O fooliſh Creature, ſince what I do will not pleaſe thee, and thou art ſo diſſatisfied with my Conduct and Management, from henceforth I will croſs thy Deſires no more, but let the Event prove good or bad, I will comply with thy Choices, and order all things to happen to thee according to thy own Will*: I think I ſhould look on my *ſelf* as the moſt *forlorn* and *abandoned* Wretch on this ſide *Hell*, as *one* utterly excluded from the *greateſt* Bleſſing that belongs to a Creature; and if I had *any* Hope of his Reacceptance, I would on my *bended* Knees reſign *back* my ſelf, and *all* that concerns me into his Hands again. I would beſeech him

above

above *all* things not to leave me to my *ſelf*, not to *throw* me from *his* Care, or *diſcharge* me from *his* Conduct; and if I could prevail with him to take me *again* into *his* Care and Protection. I would promiſe *never* to repine againſt him more, but *chearfully* ſubmit to his *heavenly* Will how ſeverely ſoever he ſhould think good to deal with me. And this not only I, but every Man elſe would do, that truly loves *himſelf*, and underſtands his own Intereſt, for *where* can our Concerns be *better* or *ſafer* lodged, than in the Hands of that *infinite* Wiſdom that knows what is *beſt* for us, and that *infinite* Goodneſs that wills what it knows *beſt*, and of that *infinite* Power that doth what it wills? Why then ſhould *any* Man be diſpleaſed that *his* Affairs are not managed his *own* way, when we are ſo ſure of *this*, that they are managed by One that hath much *more* Skill to manage them than we; and One that having the *ſame* Love for us that we have for our ſelves, will be ſure to manage them to the *beſt* Advantage? And ſince there is the ſame *Benevolence* towards us in *God*'s Will, that there is in *ours* towards our ſelves, how much *better* is it for us that *his* ſhould take Effect that is guided by ſuch an *infallible* Wiſdom, than *ours* that hath nothing to *conduct* and *ſtear* it but a *blind* Senſe, or at beſt, a *ſhort-ſighted* Reaſon. Wherefore tho'

our

our Affairs go never ſo contrary to our Wills in this *preſent* ſtate of Things, yet this we may build upon, that it is *beſt* that Things ſhould be as *God* will have them. And as when we are grown *up* to the Age of Men, we thank our Parents for thoſe *loving* Severities they Exerciſed towards us when we were Children, and not *able* to govern our ſelves; becauſe *then* we ſee, that if they had let us have *our* Childiſh Wills, and given the Reins to our *wild* Paſſions and Appetites, we ſhould in all Probability have undone our ſelves: ſo when we come to our *full* Stature in Chriſt, and are grown *up* into a *State* of Perfection, then we ſhall ſee Reaſon to *admire* and *praiſe* the Goodneſs of *God* for thoſe *merciful* Denials and *kind* Severities, upon the Account of which we *now* murmure and repine againſt him; and be fully convinced that it was *happy* for us, that we were not ſuffer'd to be *our* own Carvers, but had all *our* Allowances carved out to us by the *wiſe* and *gracious* Providence of our *heavenly* Father. Whenſoever therefore we are croſſed by *his* Providence in any of *our* Deſires, let us but conſider how *unfeignedly* he loves us, and how *much* more fit *he* is to chuſe for us than *we*, and then we ſhall ſee *infinite* Reaſon to acquieſce in his Providence, and to joyn with our *Saviour* in this *excellent* Prayer, *Father, not our Wills, but thy Will be done.*

MAT.

MATTHEW XVI. 24.

Then ſaid Jeſus unto his Diſciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs and follow me.

IN the 21. Verſe our *Saviour* declares to his Diſciples, that it was neceſſary for him to *go up to Jeruſalem*, and there to *ſuffer many things, and to be killed, and be raiſed again the third Day.* Upon which St. *Peter* rebukes him *v.* 22. ſaying, *be it far from* thee, or as it may be render'd, be propitious to thy ſelf; *this ſhall not be unto thee.* But Jeſus conſidering that this was the Work he came into the World for, tartly rebukes him, *get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an Offence unto me; for thou ſavoureſt not the things that be of God, but thoſe that be of Men. i. e.* thou talk'ſt as if thou didſt not *yet* underſtand what *God* hath foretold of me, *viz.* that I ſhall be *advanced* to *my* Kingdom by my Sufferings, and as if thou wer'ſt meerly guided by Rules of *humane* Policy; according to which, to expoſe ones ſelf to Calamities and Death, is a very *odd* way to Glory and Empire. But I tell thee, *Peter*, that it is *not* only certain that I *muſt* ſuffer

in order to my Advancement, but that thoſe alſo that will *come after me*, muſt *deny* themſelves, *and take up their Croſs and follow me.* In the management of which Words, I ſhall endeavour theſe Three Things;

1. To ſhew you what is here meant by *denying our ſelves.*
2. What *abundant* Cauſe and Reaſon there is for it.
3. How abſolutely *neceſſary* it is to our *eternal* Happineſs.

1. What is here meant by *denying our ſelves.* In general, by *our ſelves* here we are not to underſtand our Nature, conſidered as it is the Creature and Workmanſhip of *God*; for God hath endowed us with *rational* Faculties, and ſtamp'd *immutable* Principles of *Reaſon* upon our Minds; which Principles we are *ſo* far from being obliged to renounce, that they are the *fundamental* Laws of our Nature, by which we ought to regulate all our Motions and Actions. By *our ſelves* therefore we are to underſtand *our ſinful ſelves*, or our *corrupt* Nature as it is under the Power and Dominion of *wicked* Principles and Inclinations; for ſo *our ſelves* doth in Scripture many times denote *our ſinful and corrupt ſelves.* And ſo 2 *Tim.* 3. 2. 'tis made a *Character* of *bad* Men, that *they ſhould be lovers of their own ſelves*; whereas in ſtrictneſs to *love our ſelves* is *ſo* far from being

ing a Fault, that it is a *neceſſary* Inſtinct of Nature, and the Root and Principle of our *Virtue*. By loving *our own ſelves*, therefore muſt be here meant, being *indulgent* to the *vicious* Inclinations of our Nature, as he explains himſelf in the following Words, *being Covetous, Boaſters, Proud, Blaſphemers*, &c. And accordingly Chriſt is ſaid to have *died for all, that they which live, ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves*; *i. e.* to their *corrupt* Principles and Inclinations; *but unto him which died for them* 2 Cor. 5. 15. By *our ſelves* therefore here we are to underſtand every thing in us that is oppoſite to *God*, every Motion and Inclination of *our* Nature that ſtands in Competition with *his* Will, and doth *any* way contend with *his* Authority. For the *Soul* of Man is a Throne to which *God* and its *corrupt* Nature are Rivals; *God* claims it by a *natural* and *eſſential* Right, as he is the *Soveraign* of Beings, and the *Lord* of the Creation; *Corrupt* Nature claims it without any *Pretence* of Right, but like a *bare-fac'd* Uſurper *derives* its Propriety from its Poſſeſſion, and *will* rule, becauſe it will, and becauſe it hath got Strength and Intereſt enough to *ſupport* its Dominion. So that to deny *our ſelves*, is to renounce our *corrupt* Nature, and to refuſe to be governed by it, and wholly to reſign up *our ſelves* to the Government of God; to aban-

don thoſe *evil* Inclinations which are *God*'s Competitors in us, and would *countermand* his Will, and *uſurp* his Dominion. In a Word, to deny *our ſelves*, is to give away *our ſelves* from *our ſelves* to *God*; to put *all* our Powers of Action out of *our own* Diſpoſal into *God*'s, and not to ſuffer *any* Deſire or Inclination of *our own* to take Place of *his* Will, or prevail againſt *his* Authority. And therefore as they are ſaid *to deny God* who reject his Authority in Compliance with the *corrupt* Inclinations of their Nature, *Tit.* 1.16. ſo they may be truly ſaid to deny *themſelves*, who refuſe to gratifie thoſe their *vicious* Inclinations in Compliance with the Will of God. In ſhort therefore, *to deny our ſelves*, is to prefer *God*'s Will before our own, to *ſacrifice* our Inclinations to our Duty, and in *all* Competitions between *him* and *our Carnal* Intereſts and Affections to take *his* Part, and follow his Command and Directions.

2. I proceed to the Second Thing propoſed, which is to ſhew you what *abundant* Reaſon there is for *this* Duty; and this will evidently appear if we conſider ſeriouſly how much *more* advantagious it is in all reſpects, for Men to be ruled by *God*, than by *themſelves*; to follow *his* Will, and comply with *his* Pleaſure, rather than give up *our ſelves* to the Government of his Rival, *viz.* the Appetites and Inclinations of our own

own *corrupt* Nature: which will evidently appear in theſe following Particulars.

1. By thus denying *our own* Will in Complyance with the Will of *God*, we ſhall *chooſe* and *act* with much more *Eaſe* and *Freedom*.
2. We ſhall *chooſe* and *act* with much more *Evenneſs* and *Conſiſtency*.
3. We ſhall *chooſe* and *act* with much more *Peace* and *Satisfaction*.
4. We ſhall *chooſe* and *act* with much more *Prudence* and *Conduct*.
5. We ſhall *chooſe* and *act* with much more *Security* of the *Event*.

1. By denying *our own* Will to comply with *God*'s, we ſhall *chooſe* and *act* with much more *Eaſe* and *Freedom*. He that makes *his own* Will his Law, is upon every *new* Occaſion put upon *new* Deliberations, and upon every Change of Circumſtances is fain to change his Will, and to conſult *new* Choices and Reſolutions; in debating of which, he is commonly ſo *maz'd* and *bewilder'd* with *croſs* Thoughts, and *oppoſite* Counſels and Deliberations, that he hardly knows which way to determin himſelf, and is *more* at a loſs what to reſolve upon, than how to execute his Reſolution. And being thus *clogg'd* and *incumber'd* in the whole Courſe of his Motion, how is it poſſible he ſhould *act* with any *Eaſe* and *Freedom*? But

now when once a Man hath renounced *his own* Will, and intirely ſubmitted himſelf to the Direction of *God*'s, he is *free* from this Toil and Incumbrance. For the Will of *God* as to all the *material* Parts of our Duty is ſo plainly revealed, that an *honeſt* Mind with *little* Enquiry may be *ſoon* informed, and ſatisfied about it; and when once it is *ſo*, all its Choices are already determined, ſo far as they are concern'd in the Matter of its Duty; for *God*'s Will being *his*, he no ſooner knows *that*, but he reſts in it immediately with a *free* Aſſent, and *uncontrouled* Approbation, and whatſoever the *Event* be, he is fixed to one *ſteady* Courſe of Motion, being reſolved *once* for all, whatever happens, to do as *God* would have him. So that when once a Man hath intirely denied *himſelf*, and put himſelf out of *his own* Diſpoſal into *God*'s, God chuſes for him, and thereby frees him from *all* the Trouble of doubting, and deliberating, and diſputing *pro and con*, of being diſtracted between *contrary* Reaſons, and bandied *to* and *fro* by *croſs* and *oppoſite* Importunities. For now his Soul acquieſcing in *God*, as in its *proper* Place and Element, doth *no more* diſpute, *no longer* waver between *Two* Load-ſtones, but being *uniſon* with *God*, reſounds and eccho's to *his* Will, and freely follows him without deliberation.

By

2. By denying *our own* Will to comply with God's, we ſhall *chooſe* and *act* with more Evenneſs and Conſiſtency. For ſo long as Men live in *Subjection* to the Principles and Inclinations of their *corrupt* Nature, 'tis impoſſible they ſhould *act* evenly and conſiſtently with themſelves; for our *corrupt* Nature is wholly governed by the *Goods* and *Evils* that are without us, and without our Power and Diſpoſal; by *Gain* and *Loſs*, by *Eaſe* and *Pain*, by *Applauſe* and *Diſgrace*; and therefore *all* its Pleaſures and Diſpleaſures muſt be as *Caſual* and *Contingent* as the *Goods* and *Evils* are from whence they do ariſe. And whilſt we are governed by ſuch *caſual* Things as theſe, we are not *our own* Men, but do live in Subjection to a *foraign* Power, and muſt *be* what theſe Things that govern us will have us; we muſt turn as the *Wind* blows, and like *Water* take our *Form* from the Veſſels we are poured into. And while the Paſſions and Appetites that *overrule* us are thus *over-ruled* by the Chances and Contingencies without us, we muſt of neceſſity be as *various*, as *fickle*, and as *multiform* as they; we muſt put *on* as many Humors as Fortune doth Countenances, and ſhift *our* Pleaſures and Diſpleaſures upon every Turn of *her* Wheel; in a Word, we muſt be as *various*, *inconſiſtent*, and *contradictory to our ſelves*, as the Chances and Acci-

dents are that do befall us. Now what a *wretched* State is this, for a Man to be never the ſame, but be continually *wreathing* and *diſtorting* his Humour into all the *antick* Figures of his *outward* Condition, which change and vary almoſt every *Moment*? Doubtleſs *that* Man will find enough to do, that ſhall undertake to *make Faces* after an *Ape*, but he will find a great deal more that will needs be *aping* an *inconſtant* Fortune through all its *Grimaces* and Changes of Countenance.

But now he that hath throughly learned to deny *himſelf*, and to ſubmit intirely to the Government of God, is *all* of a Piece, and throughout *even* and *conſtant* with himſelf. He is for the main, the *ſame* Man when he *loſes* as when he *gains*, when he is *reproached*, as when he is *applauded*; and the reaſon is, becauſe he governs *himſelf* not by the *uncertain* Contingencies that are *without* him, but by the *immutable* Will that is *above* him; and while he doth ſo, he knows that his Happineſs is as much above the reach of the *impotent* Malice of Fortune and Men, as the *Moon* is above the Noiſe of thoſe *impertinent* Curs that ſit yelping and barking at her from below. And being under the Command of *one* Rule, which is the Will of *God*, and *one* End which is the Enjoyment of *God*, he goes evenly on in a *calm* and

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compoſed Current of Action through *all* the Changes and Viciſſitudes without him; and *all* his Motions and Deſigns, Choices and Proſecutions continue as *uniform* and *conſiſtent* with themſelves in the midſt of the *various* Contingencies of this World as the *Sovereign* Will is that commands and determins them.

3. By denying *our own* Will to comply with *Gods*, we ſhall *chooſe* and *act* with much more Peace and Satisfaction. So long as a Man governs himſelf by the Appetites and Inclinations of his *corrupt* Nature, 'tis impoſſible he ſhould ever be ſatisfied with *himſelf*; for beſides that *his own* Reaſon will reproach and upbraid him with the *natural* Filthineſs and Turpitude of his Actions, and repreſent them to *himſelf* as *ſhameful* and *inglorious*; beſides which, I ſay his own Conſcience will be *ever* and *anon* vexing and plaguing him with *anxious* and *unquiet* Thoughts and Reflections. For God hath imprinted a *Dread* of *his own* Power and Majeſty ſo *deep* upon our Natures, that with *all* our Arts we are not able to deface and obliterate it; and tho' for *ſome* time perhaps we may ſuppreſs and ſtupifie it, yet in deſpight of *our ſelves*, it will *firſt* or *laſt* rerurn again upon us, and avenge the Affronts and Violences we have offered it. Whilſt therefore a Man ſides with his *corrupt* Nature againſt God,

God, it is impoſſible he ſhould be *throughly* ſatisfied with himſelf; for either *his* Reaſon will be upbraiding him with the filthineſs of his Actions, or *his* Conſcience will be alarming him with the Vengeance that is due to them.

But when once a Man hath *throughly* denied *his own* Will and Affections, and intirely reſign'd *up* himſelf to the Government of *God*, he will be able to produce God's *own* Will and Command for the Warrant of his Choices and Actions; and this will effectually diſcharge him at the *Tribunals* of *his* Reaſon and Conſcience. For *why* ſhould *our* Reaſon ſhame, or *our* Conſcience terrifie us, ſo long as we *chooſe* and *act* in Subordination to *God*? for ſo long as we do *thus*, our Will and Actions are *his*, and being cloath'd in the *Livery* of *his* Authority, are thereby ſufficiently protected both from *Shame* and *Fear*. For *why* ſhould I be aſhamed to do as *God* wills me, whom I know to be the *Standard* of all Perfection? or *why* ſhould I be afraid to do as *God* wills me, whoſe Will is ſo intirely *righteous* and *good*, that I am ſure it can never be diſpleaſing to *his* Nature? Whilſt therefore I *chooſe* and *act* in Submiſſion to *God*, what ſhould hinder me from being as *couragious* as Truth, and as *confident* as Innocence it ſelf? for ſo long my Conſcience muſt not only *acquit* me, but

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reverence me. So that *now* my Soul which *heretofore* lived in *Thunders*, and *Lightnings*, and *Storms*, will dwell *above* in a *ſerene* Æther, and there *breath* nothing but *calm* and *gentle* Thoughts; and inſtead of thoſe *uneaſie* Reflections that were wont to diſturb my *pleaſant* Scenes of Mirth, I ſhall be continually entertained with the *ſilent* Melodies of a *clear* Conſcience, and crowned with the Applauſes of *my own* Mind.

4. By denying *our own* Will to comply with *God's*, we ſhall *chooſe* and *act* with much more Prudence and Conduct. Did we underſtand either *God* or *our ſelves*, we could not *but* be ſenſible that it is much more for *our* Intereſt to be governed by *his* Will, than by *our own*; for tho' there is no doubt, but we wiſh *well* to our ſelves, and would not wilfully prejudice *our own* Intereſt: yet it is to be conſidered, that there is the *ſame* Benevolence towards us in God's Will; beſides which, God's Will hath an *infinite* Wiſdom to ſtear by, which ſees through *all* the Intreigues of our Intereſt, and hath an *intire* Proſpect of whatſoever can *hinder* or *advance* it. Whereas *our* Wills are generally guided either by a *blind* Senſe, or by a *ſhort-ſighted* Reaſon that many times miſtakes our Intereſt, and directs us to *Rocks* inſtead of *Harbors*. And when the Diſadvantage on *this* ſide is ſo *great* and *apparent*, how can we ima-

imagine our ſelves ſo *ſafe* under the Government of *our own* Wills, as we are under the Government of *God*'s? He would have us do *this*? and we would do the *quite contrary*; and yet we acknowledge *his* Will is as *kind* and *benign* to us, as *ours* is to *our ſelves*. Why then, which of the *Two* Wills do we think is the *Wiſeſt*? God's ſure we will all acknowledge. Will then, is it not much *ſafer* for us to take the *Sun* for our Guide, than to *grope* by the *twinkling* Light of a *Glow-worm*? While we follow *our own* Will, every Step, for all we know, may plunge us into *Bogs* and *Quagmires*; but while we follow God's, we *chooſe* as wiſely for our ſelves, as an *infinite* Wiſdom can direct us. So that what *our* Will chooſes may be good for us, but what *his* Will chooſes muſt be ſo; and therefore to be ſure when ever we *chooſe* contrary to *him*, we chooſe againſt *our own* Intereſt. I am as confident of this, as of any *Principle* in Nature and Religion, that whatſoever *God* commands me to do, he muſt certainly know that it is for my *Good*, and that is the Reaſon why he commands it; and if it be, then this I am equally ſure of, that whenſoever I *act* contrary to *his* Command, I run from a *certain* Benefit, to a *certain* Miſchief. But while I *ſubmit* my Will to God's, I am guided by God's Wiſdom, and in every

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genuine Act of Obedience, I am as *infallible* as *Omniſcience* it ſelf. Whilſt therefore I am in the *Exerciſe* of my Duty, I am ſure I am *ſafe*; becauſe I am under the Direction of a Will that can never be *miſled*, and ſo can never *miſlead* me. And had *any* Thing he commands been *hurtful* to me, I know he is *ſo good* that he would never have enjoyned it; yea, had *any* Thing been but *indifferent* to me, I know he is *ſo wiſe* that he would never have concern'd himſelf or me about it. And if he hath commanded me nothing that is either *hurtful* or *indifferent* to me, it is doubtleſs *richly* worth my while to obey him even in the *ſmalleſt* and moſt *inconſiderable* Inſtances.

What a *mighty* Advantage therefore have thoſe *happy* Perſons who have intirely renounced *their own* Wills, and ſubmitted themſelves to Gods? for whilſt others, *poor Wretches*! do *grope* about under the Conduct of *their own* blind Wills, and do they know not *what*, and go they know not *whither* themſelves, but *live* by Chance and *act* at Random; *They* are conducted in all their Choices and Actions by an *all-wiſe* Will that never fails to meaſure their Actions by the *beſt* Rules, and point them to the *beſt* Ends. So that while they move by the Directions of that *heavenly* Guide, they are ſure of their Ends, and do know infallibly before hand, that

that *all* their Choices and Actions ſhall finally conſpire in *their own* Happineſs.

5. And laſtly, By denying *our own* Wills, to comply with *God*'s, we ſhall *chooſe* and *act* with much more *ſecurity* of the Event. One of the great Cauſes why Mens Minds are ſo *unquiet* and *anxious*, is, that they are not able to diſcover the *Events* of *their own* Deſigns and Actions, and it is *this* that makes them ſo *doubtful* and *tremulous* in their Motions, and Cauſes them to *act* with ſo much Caution and Anxiety; becauſe they are not able to *pry* into thoſe *hidden* Events that lurk in the *Womb* of their Deſigns. Now while Men give *up* themſelves to follow the Inclinations of *their own corrupt* Nature, they cannot but be fearfull of *ill* Conſequents, eſpecially when they conſider, that the Conſequents of their Actions are in the hands of God, againſt whom they are in Rebellion. For our Underſtanding being our *leading* Faculty, and the Eye that is to direct *our* Practice, it is impoſſible that whilſt *that* doth either diſapprove or doubt of our Actions, we ſhould ever be able to *act* with Steadineſs, and Aſſurance. For while a Man *acts* with a *miſgiving* Mind, and that which ſhould be the Guide of his Actions is diſſatisfied with his Way, he walks like a *benighted* Traveller in a dangerous Road, and is fain to *feel out* his Steps, and tread cautiouſly, leſt he

he ſhould ſtumble into a *Bog*, or a *Precipice*. Whilſt therefore a Man knows that *his* Actions are *diſpleaſing* to God, and conſiders that the *Events* of them are in God's hands, he muſt be very *unreaſonable* if he expect to be *bleſſed*, and *proſpered* in them; he muſt either conclude, that God's Diſpleaſure is nothing but a *dead* and *ineffectual* Paſſion, or that his way of *expreſſing it*, is by *Smiles* and *Endearments*. So that whilſt we take part with our *corrupt* Nature againſt *God*, we can never have any *rational* Security of the *Events* of our Actions, but muſt ſee *abundant* Cauſe, if we do not wilfully ſhut our Eyes, to be afraid of *every* Thing that happens to us; becauſe *nothing* can happen to us, but by *his* Diſpoſal whom we daily incenſe and provoke by our Actions.

But now he who hath ſincerely reſigned *up* himſelf to God, knows enough of the *Events* of *his own* Actions to ſet his Heart at Reſt, and keep his Mind in a *quiet* Enjoyment of it ſelf; for he acts with the *full* Conſent and Approbation of his Mind, and hath no *by-ways* from the Road of his Reaſon and Conſcience; but keeping ſtraight forwards, as he doth in the *plain* Tracts of *eternal* Goodneſs, he treads firmly and boldly, being *ſecure* of the Ground he goes upon, and is neither *aſhamed* nor *afraid* of *his own* Acti-

Actions; which being ſuch as his *beſt* and *pureſt* Reaſon approves, have the *chearful Euges* and Applauſes of his Conſcience continually *ecchoing* and *reſounding* after them. And when a Man is well ſatisfied that *his* Ways are pleaſing to God, he may chearfully expect, that the *End* and *Events* of them will be *bleſſed* and *proſperous*; he may build upon it, that God will *firſt* or *laſt* expreſs the Pleaſure he takes in his Actions, by crowning them with a *happy* Succeſs, and that how *grievous* ſoever any *preſent* Event of his *righteous* Actions may be, yet there is a great deal of Righteouſneſs in it; becauſe it proceeds from the *righteous Lord who loveth Righteouſneſs*; and that in the winding *up* of the Bottom, that which *now* ſeems moſt *grievous*, will be found moſt *beneficial* to him. For ſuppoſe I had an *infallible* Phyſitian, whom I know to be my Friend, conſtantly attending on me, and ordering my *Diet*, my *Phyſick*, and my *Exerciſe*; how *ſecurely* ſhould I live, and how *chearfully* ſhould I follow *all* his Rules and Preſcriptions! ſhould he order me a *courſe* or a *diſtaſtful* Diet, I ſhould thus conclude with my ſelf; well, I am ſure *this* is for my Health, and how *nauſeous* ſoever it be at preſent, I know I ſhall be the better for it as long as I live; and this would render it very *grateful* and *palatable*. Shonld he preſcribe a *ſtrong* and *painful* Purga-

gative; I ſhould *thus* conclude, well, this is to *remove* or *prevent* a Diſeaſe that will be much more *painful* than all the *preſent* Gripes and Twinges it gives me, and I am ſure it will have its *Effect*, and ſet me perfectly at Eaſe within a very *few* Moments; and this Conſideration would turn my *Pain* into *Pleaſure*. In a Word, ſhould he impoſe upon me a *toilſom* and *laborious* Exerciſe, I ſhould reſolve *thus* with my ſelf; well, tho' I ſtretch and ſweat for it *now*, I ſhall certainly be the better for it *anon*, and reap *many* Years Health and Vigour from my preſent Toil and Wearineſs; and this Reflection would *convert* a Drudgery into a Recreation. And yet this is the *real* Caſe of thoſe Men, who have intirely denied *their own* Wills, to *chooſe* and *act* in ſubordination to God: For he is an *infallible* Phyſician, and they have made him *their* Friend by ſubmitting themſelves to him, and putting *their* Lives and Intereſts in his Hands; and therefore ſince as he is God, and their *Friend*, he cannot but know and deſign what is *good* for them, they have all the Security in the World, that every thing he orders them, ſhall conduce to their *good*, ſo long as they follow *his* Preſcriptions, and that he will order them nothing, but what they would order for themſelves, if they were but as *infallible* as he is, and did fully comprehend *all* his Reaſons; and in a Word,

that tho' *this* or *that* Event may be for the *preſent* very *troubleſom* in its Operation, yet if they do not hinder the Effect of it by their own Irregularity, it ſhall certainly conduce to their *everlaſting* Health and Happineſs. And under *this* Perſwaſion, how chearfully may a Man bear *up* under all Events, and welcome the *worſt* that can happen to him; for being ſecure of the *infallibility* of God's Skill, and of the *ſincerity* of his Kindneſs to him, he hath *abundant* Reaſon to conclude, that ſince all Events are under God's Diſpoſal, he will take effectual Care, that nothing ſhall happen to him but what is for his *good*. For while his Will is ſubject to God's, his Condition is a Thouſand Times more ſafe and ſecure than if God's Will were ſubject to his; becauſe tho' there be the *ſame* Benevolence to him in both, yet *his* Will might miſlead God's, but God's Will cannot miſlead his.

And thus I have endeavoured to repreſent to you the *abundant* Advantages that do ariſe from *Self-denyal*, *i. e.* from renouncing *our own corrupt* Will and Inclination, and intirely ſubmitting *our ſelves* to the Will of God; which are ſuch as, one would think, ſhould prevail with any Man that doth but love *himſelf*, and ſincerely reſpect *his own* Intereſt. For this is as *certain* a Truth, and as much confirmed by Experience, as any

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Maxim in *Philoſophy*, that there is no ſtate of *humane* Life in which a Man can be *happy*, whilſt his own *corrupt* Will is his Law; nor none in which he can be *miſerable*, whilſt he is intirely *reſigned* and *devoted* to the Will of God.

3. I now proceed to the *third* and *laſt* Thing propoſed, which was to ſhew you how abſolutely *neceſſary* it is to our *eternal* Happineſs, that in Obedience to God, we ſhould deny *our own* Will and *corrupt* inclinations; and this will evidently appear if we conſider

1. That the *Diſpoſal* of our Happineſs is not in *our own* Will but God's.
2. That the *Standard* of our Perfection is not *our own* Will but God's
3. That the *Conformity* of our Nature to our Happineſs conſiſts not in what *we* will, but in what *God* wills
4. That the *eſſential* Acts and Ingredients of our Happineſs, are not what *we* will but what *God* wills.

1. That the Diſpoſal of our Happineſs is not in *our own* Will, but in Gods. If we would be *everlaſtingly* Happy, we muſt comply with that *bleſſed* Will upon which our *everlaſting* Happineſs depends; and the Apoſtle aſſures us, that *eternal Life is the Gift of God.* If it were in *our* Power to ſupport and defend our ſelves in a *bliſful* Exiſtence

to all Eternity, we might with *ſome* Confidence ſet *up* for *independent Free-willers*, and live as we liſt; and after we have followed the Swing of *our own corrupt* Inclinations in *this* World, promiſe to our ſelves an *Eternity* of Happineſs in the *other:* But alas, we are a ſort of *poor precarious* Beings, that are beholding to God for *every* Breath we draw, and for *every* Moment of our *Exiſtence* and *Duration*; and if he ſhould withdraw from us the *vital* Influence of his Providence but for the *Twinkling* of an Eye, we ſhould be ſo far from continuing *happy*, that we ſhould vaniſh into nothing. And therefore if we intend to be happy *for ever*, it is neceſſary we ſhould ſubmit our ſelves to *his* Will, upon whom every *Moment* of our Being depends. For when meerly by withdrawing his Arm from us, he can let us drop into *nothing* when he pleaſes, how can we hope, when we will not be ruled by him, to be upheld by him in a happy Being *for ever?* can we think that the *wiſe* and *holy* Governour of the World will be ſo regardleſs of *his own* Authority, as to *ſuſtain* and *uphold* his Subjects in their Rebellions againſt him; unleſs it be with a deſign to reduce them, or to make them *everlaſting* Monuments of his Vengeance? No, no; ſince our *Being* and *Well-being* doth *for ever* depend upon him; we may build upon it, that either he will be

be obey'd by *us*, or that he will not ſo *uphold* us, as to encourage us in our Rebellion; and conſequently, that if he doth *uphold* us *forever*, as he hath declared he will, it will be with a *dreadful* Purpoſe, *viz.* to continue us in an *everlaſting ill Being*, and hang us *up* in Chains for *publick* Spectacles of his Vengeance, that all his Creation may take warning by us. Wherefore if we are reſolved to adhere to *our own* Will in Oppoſition to God's, it is in vain for us to aſpire after a *happy* Being *hereafter*, unleſs we can find ſome way to deprive *God* of the Diſpoſal of it, and ſecure it in *our own* Power. For ſo long as *God* remains the *ſole* Arbitrator of our Fate, we muſt make *his* Will ours, or renounce all our Hopes of Happineſs.

2. It is to be conſidered that the *Standard* of our Perfection is not *our own* Wills, but Gods. For the Faculties of every Nature being the Senſes by which it *perceives* and *enjoys* its *own* Happineſs, it is impoſſible we ſhould ever enjoy a *perfect* Happineſs ſo long as the Faculties by which we are to enjoy it are imperfect. Ours therefore being a *rational* Nature, all whoſe Motions are under the Direction of an *underſtanding*, and the Command of a *free* Will, is framed and deſigned for a *rational* Happineſs; which it is as impoſſible for us perfectly to *enjoy* whilſt our *rational* Faculties are out of Order, as it is

to *perceive* the Pleaſures of *delicious* Meats, and Sounds, and Odours whilſt the *Senſories* of our *Taſt*, and *Smell*, and *Hearing* are diſcompoſed and obſtructed by any *bodily* Diſorder. But now while we follow *our own* Will in Contradiſtinction to Gods, our *rational* Nature is *all over* out of Tune; for whereas according to the *true* Order and Conſtitution of *our* Nature, our Underſtanding is to *guide* our Will, and our Will to command *all our* Paſſions and Appetites; ſo far forth as *our* Will ſwerves and deflects from Gods, it goes *quite* counter to the Principles of its *own* Reaſon and Underſtanding, and ſubjects it ſelf to the Dominion of *thoſe* Paſſions and Appetites which it ought to command; it *chooſes* and *refuſes* by the Inclination of its Affections, and not by the Directions of its Reaſon and Conſcience; which is the reaſon of that *Civil War* there is between the Law in its *Mind* and the Law in its *Members*, that is between its Reaſon and Conſcience, and its *corrupt* Luſts and Inclinations; becauſe while its Will takes Part againſt *God*, it ſides with its Luſts againſt its Reaſon, and whilſt it doth ſo, it will be ſo far from being *happy*, that it will be continually at War with its ſelf, and its Will and its Conſcience will be perpetually claſhing with *one another*. For ſo long as a Man *goes againſt his* Reaſon, his Reaſon muſt neceſſarily *go againſt him*, and be continually *reproaching* and

and *upbraiding* him, and *vexing* his Mind with *ſevere* and *angry* Reflections. And how can a Man *enjoy* himſelf, whilſt he is *thus* divided; or how can he *enjoy* the Happineſs of a *rational* Nature, whilſt he is *thus* divided from *his* Reaſon, and lives in *perpetual* Variance with it? A *Body* may as ſoon be at *Eaſe* whilſt its Bones are *out* of Joint, as a *Soul* whilſt its Faculties are *thus* broken and divided. If ever we would be *happy* with our Reaſon about us, we muſt be *all of a piece* with our Reaſon; that is, our Will muſt be *rational*, our Affections muſt be *rational*, and our Actions muſt be *rational*; if they are *not*, our Reaſon will be as much againſt *them* as *they* are againſt *it*, and ſo there will be an *everlaſting* Broil and Mutiny within us. Till therefore we are *throughout* perfectly *rational*, that is, till *all* our Faculties are intirely *compliant* with our Reaſon, it is impoſſible we can *ever* be perfectly *happy*; and tho' we had Power enough to defend our ſelves from all *hurtful* Impreſſions from *without*, and to ward *off* the Blows not only of *Devils* and *Men*, but even of *God* himſelf; yet ſo long as *our* Reaſon and *our* Will are at Variance, our Will will be a *ſpightful* Devil to us, and our Reaſon an *angry* God. So that while we are *imperfect*, you ſee, we cannot be *happy*, and while we follow *our own* Will againſt God, we cannot be perfect. For to follow *God*

and *Right Reaſon*, ſaith the Philoſopher, *is the ſame thing*; and to *preſent our ſelves*, ſaith a far greater Author, *a living ſacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, is our reaſonable ſervice*, Rom. 12. 1. For the Will of *God* being invariably *determined* in *all* its Choices and Refuſals, by the *infinite* Wiſdom and Goodneſs of his Nature, muſt be the moſt perfectly *rational* Will in the World, and as *ſuch*, the Standard and Pattern of all other Wills; and therefore ſo far forth as *our* Will doth deflect from *his*, it muſt neceſſarily be *imperfect* and *irrational*: But while I govern *my* Will by *his*, and do *chooſe* and *refuſe* by *his* Commands and Prohibitions, I follow the *Pattern* of my Perfection; and while I follow *his* Will which is a moſt *perfect* Tranſcript of *his* Nature, I tranſcribe *his* Perfections into *my own*. For while I am *copying* his Will I am *imitating* his Nature, and while I am *imitating* his Nature I am *growing* into his Likeneſs and Reſemblance: And when once my Will is all *god-like*, and its Affections and Inclinations are perfectly *conformable* to God's, then I am perfectly *rational*, and ſhall be perfectly *happy*. For now as I reſemble *God* in his Perfections, I ſhall reſemble *him* in *his* ſelf-enjoyment; my Reaſon will be perfectly *ſatisfied* with my Will, even as God's Reaſon is with his; and my Nature will be a *fair* and *beautiful* Proſpect to my Underſtanding, even

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as God's Nature is to his. I ſhall contemplate *my own* Graces with a *tranſcendent* Pleaſure and Delight, and while I *alternately* turn my Eyes upon *God* and *my ſelf*, and compare *Grace* with *Grace*, and *Beauty* with *Beauty*, I ſhall feel, as he doth, a *Heaven* of Content and Joy ſpringing *up* in my Boſom. Thus by denying *our own* Will, you ſee, and ſubmitting to God's, which is the *Standard* of *our* Perfection, we naturally grow *up* into *Bleſſedneſs*; whereas by following *our own* Wills in Oppoſition to God's, we fatally ſink *our* ſelves into *Wretchedneſs* and *Miſery*.

3. It is alſo to be conſidered that the Conformity of our Nature to our Happineſs conſiſts not in what *we will*, but in what *God* wills. To make us *bleſſed* it is not only *neceſſary* that there ſhould be *bliſful* Objects for us to enjoy, but that our Minds ſhould *agree* with and be *contempered* to them; for unleſs we are *affected* ſuitably to the *Worth* and *Excellency* of them, all the *Objects* of *Heaven* cannot make us *happy*. For as Delicacies are *grateful* only to *delicate* Palats, and Muſick to *muſical* Ears; ſo the *glorious* Entertainments of the *World to come* are a *Heaven* only to *heavenly* Minds: For to dwell with a *God* whom I do not *love*, and to be confined to a *Society* of *Spirits* whoſe Tempers I am *averſe to*; to be put upon Exerciſes againſt which I have an *Antipathy*, would be a *tedious* Conſtraint inſtead of a *free* Enjoy-

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ment; ſo that before ever *Heaven* can be a Heaven to *me*, my Mind muſt be *tuned* and *adapted* to its Joys and Beatitudes. And this is not to be effected by following *our own* Will but God's; for *our* Will as it ſtands in Oppoſition to God's is either a *ſenſual* or a *deviliſh* one, or both; and 'tis either *Covetouſneſs* or *Luxury* which are the *Luſts* of the *Fleſh*, or *Pride* or *Malice* which are the *Luſts* of the *Spirit*, that ſway and determine it in all its *Choices* and *Refuſals*; both which are as repugnant to the *heavenly* Enjoyments as *Light* is to *Darkneſs*, or *one Contrary* to to *another*. For between a *ſpiritual Heaven* and a *carnal Mind*, a *divine Heaven* and a *deviliſh Mind*, there is an *irreconcilable* Diſtance; and for *ſuch a Mind* to live happily upon *ſuch a Heaven* is as impoſſible in the nature of the Thing as it is for a *hungry Wolf* to fill his Belly with *Syllogiſms*, or to ſatisfy its Appetite upon a *Lecture* of *Philoſophy*. Whilſt therefore we give way to our *corrupt* Will and Inclination we do contract an *Antipathy* to *Heaven*, and do what in us lies to prepoſſeſs our own Minds with an *implacable* Averſion to all its Joys and Beatitudes. We take an *effectual* Courſe to *antidote* our Souls againſt *true* Happineſs, and to ſecure our Minds from being *ever* touch'd and affected with the *divine* and *ſpiritual* Pleaſures of the *World to come*. So that

that if we are ſtill reſolved to take part with our own *wicked* Will againſt *God*, we were beſt take our Pleaſure while *we* may have it, while we live among theſe *ſenſitive* Enjoyments that ſuit with our *bruti ſh* Appetites and Affections; for when we go hence into the *Spiritual World*, that will be like a *barren* Wilderneſs to us, where we ſhall find nothing to live upon, but be forced to pine away a *long* Eternity under a *deſperate* Hunger and Diſſatisfaction. But if we heartily reſign up our ſelves to *God*, and proſtrate *our* Wills to his, we ſhall thereby quickly acquire a *heavenly* Frame and Diſpoſition. For the *proper* Buſineſs of all thoſe Duties he requires at our hands is to *dreſs* and *prepare* our Souls for *Heaven*, and make us *meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light*. 'Tis by theſe that he *carves* and *poliſhes* our Natures, cuts *off* the Roughneſſes and Unevenneſſes of our Temper, and *ſquares* us into *fit Materials* for the *heavenly* Building. *For this is the will of God*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *even our ſanctification*, 1 Theſſ. 4. 3. That is the purging our Nature from *all* its *Averſion* and *Repugnancy* to the Bleſſedneſs of *Heaven*, and the inlaying it with all thoſe *divine* Diſpoſitions wherein our Conformity with *Heaven* conſiſts; for ſo our Saviour explains it, *Jo.* 12. 50; *I know that his commandment is life everlaſting*; that is, that

that what he commands, is the *Seed* and *Principle* of *everlaſting* Bleſſedneſs: That it is the *Charity* and *Humility*, the *Righteouſneſs* and *Temperance*, and *Self-reſignation* which he commands, which do *attemper* our Minds to the *heavenly* State, and by which we are to *reliſh* the Joys and Pleaſures of it *for ever*. For it is theſe *Virtues* that do *reconcile* our Appetites to *Heaven*, and without *theſe*, our Souls can *no more* reliſh the Joys of it, than our Palate can *Sweet-meats* while is is over-flowed with Gall. Unleſs therefore we will deny *our corrupt* Will and Affections, and ſubmit our ſelves to *God*, it is *Nonſenſe* for us to talk of going to *Heaven*; for *Heaven* it ſelf without a *heavenly* Diſpoſition to reliſh it, is a *taſtleſs* and *inſipid* Thing, and it is as poſſible to pleaſe a *blind* Man with the Beauty of Colours, and a *deaf* Man with a *Conſort of Muſick*, as to gratifie a *vicious* Mind with its *divine* and *ſpiritual* Enjoyments.

4. And laſtly, It is to be conſidered, that the *eſſential* Acts and Ingredients of our Happineſs are not what *we will*, but what God wills. It is a *great* miſtake, to imagine that the Happineſs of Man conſiſts in *external* Poſſeſſions, or in being ſeized of a great Plenty of *outward Goods* of any kind whatſoever; whether they be *earthly* or *heavenly*. It is not the poſſeſſing the *outward Goods* of

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this World, but the enjoying them that makes any Man *happy*; and if I had *all* the World in my Poſſeſſion, no more of it could go into *my* Happineſs than juſt what I enjoy; all the reſt would *be* like the Poſſeſſion of a *great* Mountain of Sand which I could neither eat, nor drink, nor apply to *any* of my Needs or Conveniencies: So that the Poſſeſſion of *outward Goods* is *good* only as it is in Order to the Enjoyment of them, abſtracted from which, it is altogether *indifferent* whether I am poſſeſſed of them or no. But now 'tis by *our own* Actions that we do enjoy the *Goods* we are poſſeſſed of, by applying them to the *Needs* and *Conveniencies* of our Nature, and by the *Content* and *Satisfaction* we take in the Application. So that in ſhort, our Happineſs is not in the *Goods* that are *without* us, but in the Enjoyment of them that is *within* us; that is, in thoſe Acts of Fruition, by which we *feel*, and *perceive* them. And thus if we were poſſeſſed of all thoſe *outward Goods* that *Heaven* abounds with, they could ſignifie nothing to our Happineſs, unleſs we had an *inward* Enjoyment of them, and by *proper* Acts of Fruition did *taſte* and *perceive* their Beauty and Delightfulneſs. So that all the Happineſs, you ſee, that *Heaven* or *Earth* can afford us, is immediately lodged in *our own* Acts of Enjoyment, without which, neither the Poſſeſſion

ſeſſion of *Wealth* and *Honour* upon Earth, nor of the *Preſence* of *God*, and *Saints*, and *Angels* in *Heaven* can make us in the *leaſt* degree happy. Since therefore *our* Happineſs is *ſo* immediately lodg'd in *our own* Acts, it will hence neceſſarily follow, that *thoſe* Acts by which the *Goods* of *Heaven* are to be enjoyed are the Acts of our *future* Happineſs. Now the *chiefeſt Goods* of *Heaven*, being *God*, and *Saints*, and *Angels*, and *our Selves*, the *chiefeſt* Happineſs of *Heaven* muſt conſiſt in thoſe Acts by which *God*, and *Saints*, and *Angels*, and *our Selves* are enjoyed; and by what Acts can theſe be enjoyed, but by *Godly*, *Saintly*, and *Angelical* Ones? 'Tis by *Worſhip* and *Contemplation*, by *Love* and *Imitation*, by *Dependance* and *Subjection* that *God* is to be enjoyed by us; 'tis by *Charity* and *Righteouſneſs*, by *Modeſty* and *Peaceableneſs*, by *Submiſſion* and *Condeſcention* that *Saints* and *Angels* are to be enjoyed by us; 'tis by *Prudence* and *Moderation*, by *Fortitude*, *Temperance*, and *Humility*, that we *our ſelves* are to be enjoyed by us: And therefore, if when we *go* into *Eternity*, we carry with us a Mind and Will *habituated* to theſe *beatifick* Actions, theſe Acts are the Sum and Subſtance of God's Will and Law. Whilſt therefore we take Part with *our own* Will againſt God's, we act quite counter to *our own* Happineſs, and go contrary to all the

Acts

Acts of our *heavenly* Fruition and Enjoyment. For that which *God* deſigns in all *his* Commands, is to *educate* and *train up* our Nature for *Heaven*, to *diſcipline* and *exerciſe* it in the *beatifical* Acts of the *heavenly* Life; that ſo when it is advanced from this *School of Probation*, to the *Univerſity of Happineſs*, it may be *inſtructed* in the Language, and *naturalized* to the Exerciſe of it; that it may be *prediſpoſed* and *habituated* to *Love* and *Dependance*, to *Charity* and *Righteouſneſs*, and all thoſe *beatifical* Acts by which *Heaven* is enjoyed. So that while we follow *his* Will, we are learning to enjoy *Heaven*, and perfecting our ſelves in the Acts of our *everlaſting* Fruition; that ſo when we *go* from *hence* to take Poſſeſſion of the *Goods above*, we may be perfectly vers'd in the Enjoyment of them, and have the Skill and Ability to make a *happy* Uſe of them for ever. Whereas on the contrary, while we follow *our own* corrupt Will and Inclinations, we do not only *not* learn theſe *bleſſed* Acts of Fruition, but we learn the quite contraries. Inſtead of learning to enjoy God by *Love* and *Adoration*, we learn how to divide our ſelves *eternally* from him, by contracting Enmity to him, and a *profane* Contempt of his Majeſty. Inſtead of learning to enjoy *Saints* and *Angels* by *Charity* and *Righteouſneſs*, we learn how to baniſh our ſelves from their *Society*, by con-

contracting *malicious* and *diſhoneſt* Inclinations; in a Word, inſtead of learning to enjoy *our ſelves* by *Humility* and *Temperance*, we learn how to be our own *Devils* and *Tormentors*, by contracting *Pride* and an *unlimited* Propenſion to *bodily* Pleaſures; by which means we ſhall at laſt render our Nature not only *impotent*, but alſo *irreconcilable* to all thoſe *bleſſed* Acts of our *future* Happineſs, and ſo utterly diſable our ſelves from enjoying *Heaven*, that it would be a *real* Grievance to us to be forc'd to endure it. For when by *thus* following *my own wicked* Will, I have contracted a *deep* and *inveterate* Averſion to all thoſe *beatifical* Acts by which *Heaven* is enjoyed, I have an *Antipathy* againſt *Heaven* in my Nature, and ſo long as *this* continues, *Heaven* muſt be a Torment to me inſtead of a Fruition; and if when I go from *hence* into *Eternity*, I ſhould be admitted into *Heaven*, with this *prevailing* Averſion to the *beatifical* Acts of it; I ſhould be ſo far from enjoying it, that I ſhould loath it, and rather chooſe to *baniſh* my ſelf from it *for ever*, than to be confined to a Condition ſo *unſuitable* to my Nature. Whilſt therefore I am running from *God* after *my own* Will, I am running from *Heaven*; and if I do not ſtop the ſooner, ſhall run my ſelf to a Diſtance from it, as *immenſe* and

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irreconcilable as that which *ſeparated Dives* from *Abraham*'s Boſom.

And thus you ſee how indiſpenſibly *neceſſary* upon all theſe Accounts *Self-denyal* is, in order to our *future* Happineſs. Hence then, let us all be perſwaded to renounce our *corrupt* Will and Affections, and *reſign* up our ſelves to the *Government* of *God*: And further to move you hereunto, I beſeech you briefly to conſider with me theſe Four Things.

1. That in its ſelf, *this* is the moſt *juſt* and *equitable* Thing you can do.
2. That in *this* conſiſts the *Life* and *Subſtance* of all your Religion.
3. That *this* is the *great* Hinge upon which your *Safety* and *Security* depends.
4. That in *this* you do the moſt *effectually* conſult *your own* Intereſt.

1. That to deny *your own* Wills, and reſign *up* your ſelves to the Goverment of *God*, is in it ſelf the moſt *juſt* and *equitable* Thing you can do. For all *your* Powers and Faculties are Gods by an *unalienable* Right and Property; your Underſtanding is *his*, and your Will is *his*, and all your Powers of Action are the Births and Products of his *fruitful* Will, and *Almighty* Goodneſs. And if it be thus, we muſt *neceſſarily* be obliged to ſubject *our ſelves* to him, and *proſtrate* our

Wills, and all our Powers of Action at *his* feet. If then we are *his*, as we muſt be if we are made by him, what have we to do to diſpoſe of *our ſelves* contrary to his Will and Pleaſure? with what Colour of *Juſtice* can I *chooſe* what He commands me to *refuſe*, when my Power of chooſing is *his*, and he hath a far more *undoubted* Right to it than I have to the Cloaths on my Back? when he is the *ſupream* Proprietor of *that* Will wherewith I chooſe, with what Conſcience can I vote with it againſt him, or give away *any* of my Choices and Elections from him? What is this but to *embezzle* my Maſters *Goods*, and *alienate* his *Property* from his Uſe and Service? Remember, *O Man*! in every *wicked* Choice that thou makeſt, thou giveſt away thy ſelf from thy *right* Owner, and doſt *ſacrilegiouſly* rob *God* of the Fruits of his own Creation, and muſt one Day expect to render a *dreadful* Account to him for every *Choice* thou haſt given away from him, and for every *Thought*, and *Word*, and *Action* which thou haſt preſumed to diſpoſe of contrary to his Orders: For thou haſt *no more* Right to give away *thy ſelf*, or any of thy *Choices* and *Actions* from God, and canſt *no more* juſtifie thy ſelf for ſo doing, than thou haſt to ſell away thy Landlords *Fee-ſimple*, or to entail *his Inheritance* on thy Children. And before you make *too* bold with

with *God*'s Property, or presume to dispose of his *Goods* at your Pleasure, you were best consider seriously whom you have to deal with; that you have not to do with a *Being* that is to be *hector'd out* of his Rights, or born down with Might and Violence; but with a *God* that is sufficiently sensible of your *unjust* Usurpations, and abundantly *able* to revenge them; that is *jealous* of *his own* Rights and Properties, has a *deep* Resentment of all your *injurious* Invasions of them, and an *Almighty Arm* to assert and vindicate them. And when you have considered this, then alienate your *Choices* from him if you *dare*; but in the mean Time, as you will answer the Injustice of it at the *Tribunal* of *God*, have a Care how you dispose of *your selves* contrary to his Orders, lest as a *just* Retribution he should one Day dispose of you contrary to your Wills to *everlasting* Misery and Despair.

2. Consider that in *this* denying and resigning *our selves* to God, consists the Life and Substance of *all* our Religion. For what is Religion, but a *Religation*, a *Tying* or *Binding* fast Mens Minds and Wills to God? It is the Bond of our *Allegiance* to the *Throne* of *Heaven*, by which we oblige *our selves* to be God's *Subjects*, and do resign *up* our Wills, and all our Powers of Action to his Government; and in this, as I shew'd you,

conſiſts Self-denyal. For when once we have maſter'd *our own Self-Will*, and conquer'd its Obſtinacy, and perſuaded it to yield up it ſelf to the Will of *God*, then is his *glorious* Empire ſet *up* in our Souls, then he is crowned our *Soveraign* Lord, his Kingdom is come into us, and we may cry *Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.* But till once our Religion hath tied our Souls to *God*, and obliged our Will to renounce all other *Lords*, and ſubmit to his Empire, it is only a Name, an *empty* Shew and Formality of Religion; 'tis a Religion without a Religion, or a Bond without a Tye; that is, 'tis *down right* Nonſenſe, and a Contradiction to it ſelf. And what Shews or Profeſſions *ſoever* we may make of Religion, how *zealous* or *forward* ſoever we may be in the *external* Acts of it, it will all ſignifie nothing to us, unleſs there be a *proſtrate* Will, and a *reſigned* Heart at the bottom. For this is the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the *Corner* and the *Top-Stone* of Religion, and to pretend Religion without this, is to pretend *Loyalty* in *open* Acts of Rebellion. And indeed could Religion conſiſt with a *rebellious* Will, the *Devil* himſelf might very fairly pretend to it; for that which makes him a *Devil*, is nothing but *his own boiſterous Self-Will* that is continually ſtruggling and lifting *up* it ſelf againſt *God*. And hence

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Belial is the Devil's Name, which ſignifies without Yoak; and accordingly the Children of *Belial* are deſcribed to be ſuch, *as do altogether break the Yoak, and burſt the Bonds of the Lord.* Jer. 5. 5. and called *Children of Diſobedience.* Eph. 2. 2. becauſe like their *Father Belial* they are impatient of Reſtraint, and will hearken to *no* Law but that of their own *boundleſs Self-will.* So far are thoſe Men from being truly Religious, whoſe Wills are divided from God's, that they are in *Belial's Predicament*, unyoak'd from the Divine Government, and their Wills are in a *ſtrict* Confederacy with the Devil. And hence the *Prophet Samuel* ſpeaking of *Saul's* Rebellion againſt *God*, tells him, that *Rebellion is as the Sin of Witchcraft*, 1 Sam. 15. 23. that is, Rebellion againſt *God*, is an *implicite* Confederacy with the *Devil*, even as *Witchcraft* is an explicite one. For the *Devil* being the *Prince* and *Ringleader* of the *Rebel-Creation*, whoever ſets *up* his Will againſt *God*, does thereby renounce his *Allegiance* to *Heaven*, and like a *falſe Recreant* joyns hands with the *Devil* in Rebellion againſt his Maker. And whilſt a Man's *Soul* doth thus claſp Wills with the *Devil*, and conſpires with him in *his* Rebellion againſt *Heaven*; what *impudent* Hypocriſie is it for him to pretend to Religion? Wherefore, either let us be ſo *modeſt* for the future

as not to pretend to Religion, or any of thoſe *bleſſed* Hopes it ſets before us; or let us reſolve to be ſo *honeſt* to our Pretenſions as to *deny* our ſelves, and *reſign up* our Wills to *God*. For while our Will and God's are divided and ſeparated, and do in any Inſtance tread *Antipodes* to *each other*, all our Pretence of Religion is a *ſhameleſs* Cheat, which when it comes to be examined at the *Tribunal* of *God*, will be found a *meer* Paint, and *artificial* Complection dawb'd upon a *black* and *deviliſh* Nature.

3. Conſider that upon our denying *our ſelves* and reſigning our Wills to *God*, depends all *our* Safety and Security. For if *God* be againſt us, all the Powers of *Heaven* and *Earth* can't ſecure us; becauſe *his* Will hath an *infinite* Power conjoyned with it, that like an *irreſiſtible* Torrent bears down *all* Oppoſitions, and ſweeps every Thing before it that ſtands in its way. To what purpoſe then ſhould ſuch *impotent* Things as we, ſet up *our* Wills againſt *his*, Can *you* ever hope to prevail againſt *him*, or to force his *Almighty* Will into a Compliance with yours? Gird up your ſelves like Men, and I will *demand* of you in the Name of *God*; have you an Arm like *God*, or can you *thunder* with a Voice like *him*? are ye able to withſtand the *Whirlwind* of *his* Power, or to ſhelter your Heads againſt the *Storms* of *his* Ven-

Vengeance? alas! no; a *Feather* in the Air may ſooner ſtop a *Thunder-bolt* that comes roaring down from the Clouds, than you can the Courſe of that *Almighty Will* which doth whatever it pleaſes both in *Heaven* and *Earth*: And if ſo, with what ſafety can you oppoſe your *impotent* Will to it, or *how* can you expect to proſper in ſuch an *unequal* Contention? Since therefore *God* doth ſo infinitely *out-match* you, and 'tis infallibly certain, that *firſt* or *laſt* he will be *too* hard for you; all that is left to your Choice is, whether you will *do* his Will or *ſuffer* it; whether you will *obey* his Commands, or *endure* his Inflictions: for one of theſe *you muſt* do, but which of the *Two*, is left to *your own* Election. If you think it more *eligible* to obey what *God* hath *enjoyned*, than to endure what he will *inflict*, you may by chooſing the *former*, eternally ſecure your ſelves from the *latter*; For, beſides, that ſuch is the *generous* Goodneſs of God's Nature, as it will not permit him to trample upon the *Proſtrate*, nor to deny *fair Quarter* to ſuch as lay down their Arms, and freely ſurrender themſelves to *his* Will and Diſpoſal, beſides this, I ſay, upon the Satisfaction which his own *Son* hath made for the *Sins* of the World, he hath obliged himſelf by a *publick* Grant and Promiſe of Mercy to receive us into his Favour and Protection upon our

unfaigned Submiſſion to him, and to treat us graciouſly notwithſtanding all our *paſt* Rebellions, as if we had been for ever perfectly *loyal* to him, and had neither in *Thought*, nor *Word*, nor *Deed* offended him. So that if now if we will heartily ſubmit *our* Wills to him, he cannot let *looſe* his Power on us without forfeiting *his* Truth, and doing Violence to the Perfections of *his own* Nature. But notwithſtanding all the *Goodneſs* of his own Nature, and all the *Vertue* of that *Propitiation* that he hath made for our *Sins*, this is a Law which he will never diſpenſe with; *I will ſee that my Creatures ſhall obey me, or feel me, that they ſhall conform to my Will, or ſink under my Vengeance; and if they will be ſo deſperate as to refuſe the former, all the Powers of Heaven and Earth ſhall not ſecure them from the latter.* If therefore you are ſo *abandoned* of all Reaſon, as to think it *more* eligible to ſuffer the Will of *God* than to obey it, you muſt e'en take what follows; for as ſure as *God* is in *Heaven*, and you upon *Earth*, you ſhall one Day feel the Weight of his Arm, if you do not freely *ſurrender* your ſelves to *his* Will and Diſpoſal. But before you do ſo, for your *Souls* ſake conſider once more what a *terrible* Election you are making, that 'tis the *unquenchable* Wrath of the *everliving God* that you are throwing your ſelves *upon*, a Wrath that will *imprint* it ſelf upon

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every Faculty of your Nature, and be dropping like *burning Sulphur* upon your Souls *for ever*. And if after you have conſidered this, you will ſtill adhere to your *deſperate* Option, *the Lord have Mercy upon your Souls*.

4. And laſtly, Conſider that if there were *no* Obligation to this Duty, or *no* Danger in the contrary, yet in thus denying *our ſelves*, and reſigning *our* Wills to *God*, we do the moſt *effectually* conſult *our own* Intereſt. For *God*, being infinitely happy in *his own* Perfections, and deriving all *poſſible* Satisfaction from his own *Self-Sufficiency*, cannot be ſuppoſed to deſire *any* Thing for himſelf *without* himſelf; and being perfectly exempted from *all* Want and Indigence by the *infinite* Fulneſs of his Being, he can have *nothing* of Envy or Malice in his Nature, which are *weak* and *impotent* Paſſions that do *always* ſpring out of a ſenſe of Need and Inſufficiency, and are *utterly* inconſiſtent with a State of *perfect* Fulneſs and Beatitude. Since therefore in his *outward* Adminiſtrations he can have no *Self-Ends* to ſerve upon his Creatures, and ſince he can have no Principle of *Envy* or *Malice* towards them in his Nature, it hence neceſſarily follows that in ruling and governing them he can have no *other* Deſign upon them but to do them *good*, and make them like *himſelf*, *i. e.* perfectly *good* and perfectly *happy*. So that

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God's End and *ours* is always the ſame; *we* would be happy and *God* would have us ſo *too*, and we our ſelves cannot aim at our Happineſs more *heartily* and *ſincerely* than he does; all the Difference therefore between *him* and *us* is about the *Means* and *Way* to our Happineſs: We are for *one* Way, and he is for *another*; we think the Way to our Happineſs is *to live in all Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts*, and he thinks the Way to it is *to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent World.* So that the *whole* Diſpute between *God* and *us*, ſo far as Reaſon is concerned in it, depends upon *this*, whether *God* be in the right, or *our ſelves*; whether *we* are not deceived in chuſing *this* Way, or *God* be not deceived in preſcribing the *contrary.* If we have any Reaſon to think that *we* are *wiſer* than *God*, or do *better* underſtand the Way to *our own* Happineſs; then it muſt be acknowledged that in refuſing *God's* Way and chuſing *our own*, we do adviſedly conſult *our own* Intereſt; but this is *ſuch* a Suppoſal, as, I believe, never entered into *any* Man's *ſober* Thoughts. And if we have all the Reaſon in the world to conclude not only that *God* is *wiſer* than *we*, but that whereas *we* are extremely *ſhort-ſighted* and *apt* to be impoſed upon with *gliſtering* Shews and Appearances, he hath ſuch a *full* Comprehenſion of all Things as that he cannot be

be deceived; then we may be ſure that when we forſake *our own* Way and follow God's we cannot be *miſled*, but at every ſtep muſt be tending directly to *our own* Happineſs. For if *God* cannot be deceived, and we may, it is certain that whenever *our* Way to Happineſs lies contrary to *his*, he is in the *right* and we are in the *wrong*; and conſequently that when we forſake *his* Way to follow *our own*, we go from Happineſs to Miſery. Is it *likely* that *we* ſhould know what belongs to *humane* Nature, and the *ordering* and *regulating* its Affections and Actions? That *we* ſhould underſtand the *juſt* Bounds and Meaſures where it is to be *reſtrained* and where to be *indulged* better than the *God* that formed and compoſed it. And if it be *not*, as doubtleſs it is not, were we not much better reſign *our* Wills to *his* Government than to live at *our own* Diſpoſal? For he deſires to govern us for no *other* Reaſon but becauſe he knows he can govern us much better than *our ſelves*. He ſees that we are a ſort of *blind* and *precipitant* Creatures, that muſt unavoidably ſtumble into *eternal* Ruine if we follow *our own* Wills; and therefore he would fain retrieve us out of *our own* Hands, that ſo having the *ſole* Diſpoſal of us *himſelf*, he may conduct us ſafely to Happineſs. And when *He* intends as kindly to *us* as *we* can to our ſelves, were we not better

better follow *his* Wiſdom than *our own* Folly? He knows that our *Self-love* will in the Effect prove *Self-hatred* to us, if it be not moderated and directed by a *better* and a *wiſer* Love; and therefore he would have it under the direction of *his*, which is the *beſt* and *wiſeſt* Love in the World. He deſires to have the Government of our Will upon no *other* Account but only that he might determine *all* its Choices to our Happineſs, and requires our Hearts of us meerly for *this* End, that he might fill them with Peace and Reſt. He knows that our Perfection and Happineſs lies in Compliance with our Duty, in *Piety* and *Juſtice*, *Mercy* and *Humility*, and that out of the *free* and *conſtant*, *ſprightly* and *vivacious* Exerciſe of theſe *Virtues* ariſes *all* our *Heaven* both *here* and *hereafter*; and knowing this, that *tender* Love he bears us, that *mighty* Concern he hath for our Welfare makes him thus *urgent* and *importunate* with us in his Demands of our Duty; for he regards our Duty no farther than it tends to our *Good*, and values *each* Act of our Obedience by what it contributes to our Happineſs. He affects not to burthen us with *unneceſſary* Impoſitions; all that he requires of us is what our Intereſt requires, which is ſo *dear* and *precious* to him that he will diſpenſe with nothing that is *neceſſary* to promote and ſecure it; and 'tis there-

therefore he will not diſpenſe with us, becauſe he *cannot*, without releaſing us from our Obligation to be happy. Why then ſhould we deſire, O *fooliſh* Creatures that we are, to be releaſed from the Yoak of *his* Government? Or how can we count it Liberty to be *looſed* from an *infinite* Goodneſs that is conducted by *infinite* Wiſdom and Power? For whatſoever my *blind* Luſts and Paſſions may dictate, my Reaſon aſſures me that the *greateſt* Privilege that belongs to a Creature is to be under the Government of *God*, and that if he ſhould releaſe me from my Subjection to *his* Will by a Diſpenſation under the *Broad-Seal* of *Heaven*, and give me an *unlimited* Licence to live as I liſt, promiſing *never* to be diſpleaſed with me more, or to take any *farther* Cognizance of my Actions; the *beſt* and *wiſeſt* Thing I could do for my ſelf would be to *reſign* back my ſelf to his Government, and ſurrender *up* my *blind* and *precipitant* Will to his moſt *wiſe* and *gracious* Diſpoſal! And if he ſhould refuſe to *re-admit* me to his Government, and abandon me *for ever* to my own *Self-Will*, I ſhould be the moſt *forlorn* Soul on this ſide *Hell*; I ſhould not know what to do, nor which Way to turn my ſelf; but be forced to wander in a *dark* Wilderneſs without being ever able to diſcover any certain *Path-way* to my Happineſs. But

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ſo long as I am under the Government of *God*, I am ſure I am ſafe; and while I follow his *All-wiſe* and moſt *gracious* Will, I know that I am going to a *happy* End; and that how rough ſoever my Way *is*, it will bring me to *Canaan*. What then remains but that from henceforth we utterly deny *our ſelves*, renounce our *corrupt* Wills and Inclinations, and chearfully reſign our ſelves to the Will of *God*; which hath no *other* Deſign upon us but to do us *Good*, to raiſe and advance our *degenerate* Natures, and conduct us through the Kingdom of *Grace* into the Kingdom of *Glory*.

1 JOHN III. 7.

Little Children, let no man deceive you: He that doth righteouſneſs, is righteous, even as he is righteous.

THeſe Words are a ſhort and plain Reſolution of that *Grand* Caſe, *viz.* how a Man may know whether he be in a ſtate of *Grace* and *Favour* with God; or, which is all one, whether he be a *good* Man and a good *Chriſtian*. The *Gnoſticks*, againſt whom St. *John* particularly directs this Epiſtle, placed all *Righteouſneſs* and *Goodneſs* in certain *pretended* Illuminations, which had nothing in them but certain *ſwelling* Words of Vanity, and like *gilded* Bubbles were blown *up* with wind, and filled with *myſtical* Nonſence. And tho' in their *Lives* and *Manners* they were a Reproach and Scandal not only to *Religion*, but even to *humane* Nature; yet merely upon the account of theſe their *own* Wild Dreams, they vaunted themſelves to be the only *Elect*, and *Favourites* of *God*, and imagined themſelves advanced to *that* degree of Perfection, as that they were above all *Law*, and freely diſpenſed with under the *Broad-Seal* of Heaven to live as they liſt, and

and to wallow in *Riot* and *Voluptuouſneſs*. Againſt theſe *wild* Men the *Apoſtle* here ſeems to forewarn *his little Children*; ſuffer not theſe vile Deceivers to impoſe upon your Faith this their *damnable* Error, *viz.* that by receiving their *high-flown* Myſteries and *pretended* Revelations, you ſhall without any more ado be conſtituted *perfect* and *righteous* Men in the ſight of *God*; for from *God* himſelf I do aſſure you that *he*, and he only, *that doth Righteouſneſs, is righteous even as he is righteous*; *i. e.* as *Chriſt* is righteous, of whom I juſt before diſcourſed.

In the Proſecution of which Argument I ſhall endeavour theſe two Things; *Firſt*, to ſhew you, what it is to *do Righteouſneſs* in general; Secondly, what that *righteous Doing* is which in the ſenſe of *Chriſtianity* conſtitutes us *Righteous* Men.

1. What it is to *do Righteouſneſs* in general. I anſwer, it is to give to every one his *Due*, or to perform to *God*, our ſelves, and to all the World whatſoever is owing from the State of our *Nature*, and the *Relations* and *Circumſtances* wherein we are placed. And in this Latitude to do *Righteouſneſs* is the ſum of *Religion*, and the *Whole Duty* of man. The *righteous* Man therefore, or the Man that doth *Righteouſneſs* is, in the ſenſe of the Text, one, that demeans himſelf ſo, as in the Judgment of *Right Reaſon* he ought

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to do towards *God*, himſelf, and all the World; that looking upon himſelf under the *Relation* of God's Creature and Penſioner, doth freely render him all that *Homage*, and *Reverence*, and *Love*, and *Gratitude*, and *Truſt*, and *Adorotion* that are owing to ſo *great* a Creator, and ſo *liberal* a Benefactor; One that conſidering the Frame of his *own* Nature, how he is compounded of *contrary* Principles, *viz. Spirit* and *Fleſh*, *Reaſon* and *Senſe*, exerciſes himſelf in all thoſe *humane* Virtues, which conſiſt in the Dominion of his *ſuperior* Principle of *Reaſon* over his *ſenſitive* Paſſions and Appetites; ſuch as *Patience* and *Equanimity*, *Courage* and *Meekneſs*, *Temperance* and *Chaſtity*; all which are proper to us as Beings made up of *contrary* Principles, from whence ſpring thoſe contrary *Appetites* and *Inclinations* in us; in the *good* or *bad* Government whereof, the *Eſſence* of *humane Virtue* and *Vice* conſiſts. In a Word, the *righteous* Man is one, who, conſidering his *State*, and *Circumſtances*, and *Relations* in the World, behaves himſelf in them all as *right Reaſon* directs and obliges him; that as he is a *Member* of *humane* Society, bears an hearty *Good-Will* to the *whole Corporation* of Mankind; that is *courteous* and *affable*, *peaceable* and *condeſcending*, *long-ſuffering* and *ready to forgive*; that is *grateful* to thoſe from whom he hath received *Good*, and ſo

far as he hath Opportunity, is ready to do *Good* to *others*; that is *faithful* to his *Promiſes*, *ſincere* in his *Profeſſions*, *juſt* and *honeſt* in his *Dealings*; that heartily wiſhes every Man were *good*, and without *manifeſt* Reaſon to the contrary, believes every one to be ſo; that when he ſees a *Fault* is ready to *excuſe* it, and where he cannot, ſilently *bewails* and *laments* it; that as a *Subject* is *loyal* and *obedient* to his *Superiors*, and as a Superior is careful of the *Publick Good*, and *juſt* and *benign* towards all his Inferiours; that as a *Father* loves his *Children*, piouſly and wiſely educates them, and is provident for their Happineſs both *here* and *hereafter*; that as a *Child* reverences his *Parents*, and is ready to *comfort* and *aſſiſt* them in their Needs, and in all lawful Things to render them a *chearful* Obedience; that as a *Husband* is *kind* to his *Wife*, *compaſſionate* to her Infirmities, and *eaſie* to be entreated by her; that as a *Wife* is *modeſt* in her Behaviour, *careful* and *vigilant* in her Family, and *ſoft* and *tractable* to the Will of her Husband; that as a *Maſter* is *juſt* and *benevolent* to his *Servants*, and ſtudious of their Welfare both *temporal* and *eternal*; that as a *Servant* is *induſtrious* in his Buſineſs, and *faithful* to his Truſt, and *obedient* to his Maſter; that in Adverſity is *reſigned* and *contented*, honeſtly induſtrious to live, and *grateful* to thoſe that relieve him

him; that in *Proſperity* is *humble* and *modeſt*, and full of *good Works*; and to name no more, He is a *cordial* Friend, a *good* Neighbour, a *faithful* Correſpondent, and a *zealous* Lover of his Country: Theſe are the *main* Ingredients that compound a *righteous* Man; and accordingly we find that whereever he is mentioned in *Scripture*, he is always deſcribed by ſuch like *Characters* as theſe: thus in the 15th *Pſalm*, where the *Pſalmiſt* ſets himſelf on purpoſe to deſcribe the *righteous* Man that ſhould dwell in the Tabernacle of *God*, he is repreſented as one that *walketh uprightly, and worketh Righteouſneſs; that ſpeaketh Truth*, and is *tender* of his Neighbour's Reputation; that freely lends to thoſe that are in Need, and will not be bribed againſt the *Innocent*. So alſo *Ezek.* 18. 14, 15, 16, 17. he is deſcribed to be one that is no *Idolater*, no *Adulterer*, no *Oppreſſor*; that doth not *defraud* his Neighbour of his *Right*, but is *juſt* and *Liberal* to the Poor, and freely lends to thoſe that are in need. And *Micah* 6. 7. the *Prophet* tells us what it is that renders us *juſt* and *acceptable* in the ſight of *God*, viz. *doing Juſtice, loving Mercy*, and *walking Humbly with God*. So alſo in the *New Teſtament* we are taught, that *pure and undefiled Religion* conſiſts in *viſiting the Fatherleſs and Widows in their affliction*, and *keeping our ſelves unſpotted from*

the World. James 1. 27. and Gal. 5. 22. St. *Paul* tells us that the *fruits of the Spirit* which render us *righteous* in the ſight of *God*, are ſuch as theſe, *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-ſuffering, Gentleneſs, Goodneſs, Faith, Meekneſs, Temperance*; and to name no more, the ſame *Apoſtle* Tit. 2. 11. ſaith that the Righteouſneſs which the *Goſpel*, or *Grace* of God deſigns to propagate in the World, is this, *that denying ungodlineſs and worldly-luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in this preſent World*; which Three, are the Sum of all thoſe *Virtues* which conſtitute a *Righteous Man.*

Having thus ſhewed what it is in general to do *Righteouſneſs*, I now proceed in the *ſecond* Place to ſhew what that *Righteous Doing* is, which in the Senſe of *Chriſtianity* doth conſtitute us *Righteous Men*: In order to which it will be neceſſary to premiſe theſe Three Things.

1. That *Chriſtianity* ſuppoſes many *Imperfections* and *Infirmities* in thoſe whom it yet allows to be *Righteous Men*; and indeed if it did not, it could admit no Man in the World to be righteous. For it hath ſeemed good to the *Divine Wiſdom* to introduce us into the World in an *imperfect* State, that ſo by the *good* Uſe of our own *free Wills* and *rational Faculties*, aſſiſted by his *Grace*, we might by Degrees advance to a more *ſublime* and

and *perfect* Condition, till through our *gradual* Progreſs from this *rude* and *imperfect* State, we at length arrive to the Perfection of Happineſs for which we were made: And ſuch is the Condition of our Nature, as that it is as neceſſary for us to begin imperfectly, as to be born Infants; nor can a *Babe in Chriſt* any more have the Perfections of a *grown* and *experienced* Chriſtian, than can an *Infant* of a Span long have the Strength and Wiſdom of a Man. In this State of Things therefore, if God will not allow the *loweſt* Degree of our Perfection to be *good*, neither can he the *higheſt*; for our Improvement being gradual, there muſt of neceſſity be a *firſt* Degree, before there can be a *ſecond*; and therefore if *God* allows not the *firſt*, he muſt for the ſame Reaſon diſallow the *ſecond* of the *ſame* kind, and ſo on from the *third* to the *higheſt* Degree of all. Seeing therefore *Chriſtianity* is a *Religion* for Men, it muſt be ſuppoſed to be fitted to their *low* and *imperfect* Condition, which it could not be if it did not *abate* for our Defects, and admit us to be *righteous* in the *main*, even while we are imperfectly ſo; and that it doth ſo, is apparent by the diſtinction it frequently makes between the *leſs* and the *more* Perfect, ſtill allowing both to be Righteous. Thus it diſtinguiſhes between *Babes* and *Men*, allowing *both* to be in Chriſt; between

the *Weak*, and the *Strong*, and *Confirmed*, allowing both to be in the Faith: And our Saviour himſelf ſpeaking of *ſome*, who upon receiving the Seed of the *Goſpel* brought forth *Thirty*, of *others* who brought forth *Sixty*, and *others* a *Hundred-fold*, doth yet allow them all to be *good Ground*. Matth. 13. *and* Luke 19. 14. He as well allows *him* to be a *good and faithful Servant* who had improved his *Tallent into Five*, as he who had improved *his into Ten*. From all which it is evident, that the *Goſpel* doth not judge of our *main* State by the Degrees, but by the Reality of our Righteouſneſs.

2. It is to be premiſed, that *that* which conſtitutes us *Righteous Men* in the Judgment of the *Goſpel*, is ſome *internal vital* Principle of Righteouſneſs. For as all other Things receive their Denomination from their Forms, ſo it is from ſome *internal* Form of Righteouſneſs that *righteous Men* receive their Denomination. It is not the ſimple doing *righteous* Actions that conſtitutes a Man righteous; for he may be a very *bad* Man, not only while he doth that which is Righteous, but alſo in the very doing of it. Thus a Man may *faſt* and *pray*, only to *gloſs* his Oppreſſions; he may do an *honeſt* Action, to *diſguiſe* a *knaviſh* Deſign, in which Caſe he ſins in the doing it, becauſe in the doing it, he *prophanes* Religion by

by making it a *Cloak* for his Wickedneſs; a plain Evidence, that Actions which in themſelves are materially *good*, do partake of the *Principles* from whence they do proceed, and receive their *Form* and *Denomination* from them; ſeeing even *good* Actions may be infected by a *bad* Principle, and derive into themſelves the *Malignity* and *Baſeneſs* of the Fountains from whence they flow. And if without a *righteous* Principle our Actions cannot be *righteous*, to be ſure neither can we; b cauſe *we* are as our Actions are. Hence you may obſerve in the *New Teſtament*, that *good* Men are generally denominated from ſome *internal* Form of Goodneſs; they are ſaid to be *born of God*, and to have the *ſeed of God remaining in them.* 1. Joh. 3. 9. and to be *renewed in the Spirit of their Mind*, Eph. 4. 23. to be *ſpiritually minded*, Rom. 8. 6. and to be *transformed by the renewing of their Mind*, Rom. 12. 2. and to be *partakers of the Divine Nature*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. all which, do plainly denote, that to conſtitute us *righteous Men* in the Senſe of the *Goſpel*, there is neceſſarily required ſome *internal* Form and Principle of Righteouſneſs.

3. And laſtly, We muſt premiſe, that *Chriſtianity* being the Law or Rule of our *Religion*, the *internal* Principle, which in the Senſe of this Law conſtitutes us Righteous, muſt be ſtrictly Religious; that is, it muſt

be ſuch as doth immediately reſpect *God*, who is the *great* Object of all *Religion*. For *Religion* in the ſtricteſt Senſe, is the Rule of *Divine* Worſhip, and under this Notion of *Divine* Worſhip, or Homage, and Obedience to *God*, Chriſtianity exacts *every* Duty of us; for it requires us *to do all as unto God*, and to *do all to the Glory of God*; *i. e.* in Obedience to him, and out of a *ſincere* Acknowledgment of his *Authority* over us, and *immutable* Right to rule and command us: And even thoſe *moral Virtues* which do immediately reſpect our Neighbours and *our ſelves*, are enjoyned as Duties unto *God*, and bound upon us with *religious* Obligations. So that now all the *Acts* and *Functions* of a *good* Life are adopted into the Rubrick of *Chriſtian Worſhip*, and required of us as *Acts* of Obedience to *God*; from whence it follows, that the Spring and Principle of thoſe *Acts* muſt be ſtrictly Religious, immediately reſpecting *God* and his *Authority* over us; it being impoſſible thoſe *Acts* ſhould be truly *religious*, which do not proceed from a *religious Principle*.

Theſe Things being premiſed, I come now to lay down what *that* Principle is, which in the Senſe of *Chriſtian Religion* conſtitutes us *righteous Men*. In general, it is *a conſiderate, univerſal prevailing Reſolution* to obey *God*, proceeding from our Belief of the

the *Chriſtian Religion:* For the better underſtanding of which, I ſhall briefly explain the *particular* Terms of it.

1. I ſay it is a *Reſolution.*
2. It is a *Reſolution* of obeying *God.*
3. It is a *conſiderate* Reſolution.
4. An *univerſal,* and
5. A *prevalent* one.
6. A Reſolution of obeying *God,* ſpringing out of our Belief of the *Chriſtian Religion.*

1. It is a Reſolution; by which I exclude the *Habit* of Obedience from being the *prime* and *conſtitutive* Principle of *Chriſtian* Righteouſneſs. For *Chriſtianity,* as was ſhewn before, ſuppoſing *great* Imperfections and Infirmities even in thoſe whom it allows to be *righteous* in the main; if we would judge rightly of *our own* State by the *Chriſtian* Rule, we muſt take meaſure of *our ſelves* from that which is the *loweſt* and moſt *imperfect* Principle of Righteouſneſs, and not conclude our ſelves to be *unrighteous,* becauſe we are not righteous to *ſuch* a Degree; but as for the habit of Obedience which conſiſts in an *inherent* Promptneſs, Facility and Eaſineſs to obey, it is ſo *perfect* a Principle, as is not attainable but under a *long* Progreſs in *Religion.* For when after a *vicious* Courſe of Life we begin to reform, we are ſo far from being *habituated* to obey

obey *God*, that we obey him with Difficulty, and *ſtrong* Reluctancy, and are fain to row againſt the Stream of *our own* Inclinations; in which ſtate we are far from having attained to an *Habit* or Promptneſs of obeying. So that by making *this* the *conſtitutive* Principle of *Chriſtian* Righteouſneſs, we exclude from the State of Righteouſneſs all *Beginners* in *Religion*, and do allow none to be *faithful* Servants, but thoſe who have conquer'd the difficulties of obeying. The true Form or Principle therefore, from which we receive the Denomination of *righteous Men* is *that* Point or Term, from which we *begin* to be righteous, and that is a *righteous* Reſolution. For *Choice* and Reſolution is the Spring of all *voluntary Actions*, and conſequently from thence we begin to act righteouſly, and in the purſuit of *that*, we grow and improve into an *habit* of Righteouſneſs. Our *firſt* ſtep, is to reſolve well; our *next*, to do well; the *uninterrupted* Repetition of which, will at length improve into an *habit* of well-doing. *I will ariſe*, ſays the *Prodigal*, *and go to my Father*; *that* was the *firſt* ſtep of his Return, and the *vital* Principle whence all his *After-motions* did proceed.

2. It is a Reſolution to obey *God*; by which I exclude thoſe *good* Reſolutions from being the *Chriſtian* Principle of Righteouſneſs

neſs which have *no* reſpect at all to *God*, but either to the gratifying our *natural* Temper only, or to the *ſecuring* our Health, or Reputation, or *ſecular* Intereſt; which, tho' they may be productive of very *good Morals* in our Converſation, are far from being the *inward* Form and Principle of Righteouſneſs which Chriſtianity requires; for *that*, as was before premiſed, muſt be ſtrictly *religious*, and conſequently, muſt be a *Reſolution* to obey *God*. For that we ſhould obey *God*, is the *fundamental* Law of *Religion*, whence all its *particular* Laws derive their Force and Obligation; and therefore to reſolve to obey God muſt be the *fundamental* Principle of *Religion* from whence all the particular *Acts* of it proceed. So that the *internal* Principle which conſtitutes us religiouſly *good*, muſt anſwer to that *external* Principle which obliges us to be ſo; and it is only our Reſolution to obey *God*, which anſwers to that *external* Principle that makes it our Duty to obey him. In *this* Reſolution, and in *this* only, conſiſts the *Submiſſion* of our Wills to *God*, the *Homage* and *Fealty* of our Souls; without which, all *external* ſhews of *Piety* and *Virtue*, are but a *dead* Formality. Not that an *actual* explicite Reſolution of obeying *God* is neceſſary to every *good* Action, for this is impoſſible; our Occaſions of doing good being ſo *infinite*, and ſo *often* occurring

curring in our *ſecular* Affairs, and our Minds ſo incapable of attending many Things at once, that it is not in our Power to form an *actual* Reſolution of Obedience, as often as we are called upon to do *good* Actions. It is ſufficient therefore, that in general we have *ſuch* a Reſolution fixt in our Minds; and this, tho' we do not exert it in every *particular* Action, will conſtitute every Action *good*, and render it acceptable to *God*.

3. It muſt be a *conſiderate*, *well-weighed* Reſolution; by which I exclude from being the Principle of *Chriſtian* Righteouſneſs, all thoſe *raſh* and *unſettled* Purpoſes Men make in Heats of *Paſſion*. For there can never be any *holding good* Reſolution, but what is founded upon *Reaſon* and *Judgment*; for *Reaſon* is the ſame Thing in all Circumſtances; it is a *ſtiff* and *inflexible* Thing, that will not ply and bend to the *Alterations* of our Humours and Intereſts; whereas *Paſſion* is a *fickle* and *inconſtant* Thing that is generally governed by *outward* Accidents, and is as *various* and *mutable* as they. He therefore that founds his *good* Reſolutions upon Heats of Paſſion, ſets his Soul upon a *Weather-cock*, which every *contrary* Blaſt of Humour or Intereſt, blows into a *contrary* Poſition. Till ſuch time therefore as a Man hath a *new* Judgment of Things, it will be in vain for him to make any *new* Reſoluti-

ons;

ons; becauſe it is *morally* impoſſible that *any* Reſolution ſhould be laſting, that is not founded upon *Reaſon* and *Judgment*. But when a Man hath ſteared the *paſt* Courſe of his Life by an *old, inveterate, falſe* Judgment of Things, it will require a great deal of *ſerious* Conſideration to form and ſettle a new one; and if before this is done, men enter upon *new* Reſolutions, they muſt reſolve without conſidering either the *Matters* they reſolve on, or the *Motives* which ſhould ſupport their Reſolution; inſomuch that when they come to practiſe what they *thus* haſtily reſolved, either they find more Difficulty in the *Matter* than they were aware of, or want *ſufficient* Motives to carry them through it; by reaſon of which their Reſolution *flaggs* in the Execution, and many times yields to the *next* Temptation that encounters them. To the forming therefore of a *holding* Reſolution, ſuch as will prove a *living* Principle of Righteouſneſs, great Care muſt be taken to found it on a *through* Conſideration both of the Particulars we reſolve upon, together with their *appendent* Difficulties; and of the Motives and Arguments with which *Chriſtianity* backs and inforces it. Firſt we muſt ſet before our Eyes the *Sins* we muſt part with, and the *Duties* we muſt ſubmit to, and fairly repreſent to our ſelves the *many* Difficulties

ties and Temptations that are like to attend us in both; and having thus placed our ſelves in the *midſt* of the Difficulties of a *religious Life*, and ſo far as in us lies, rendred them *actual* and *preſent* to us; we muſt never ceaſe preſſing our *ſtubborn* Wills with the Arguments and Motives of *Religion*, till we have obtained of them an *explicite* Conſent to every Duty that calls for our Reſolution. And when we have *thus* weighed all Particulars over and over in the Ballance of an *impartial* Conſideration, and implored the *Divine* Aſſiſtance, (without which our *ſtrongeſt* Reſolutions will certainly fail, and which is never wanting to any but thoſe who are wanting to themſelves) let us then reſolve, and ſeal our Reſolution with *ſolemn* Vows and Promiſes to God: For thus our *bleſſed Saviour*, when he ſaw the Multitude forward to follow him, fairly propoſes to their Conſideration the Difficulties they muſt engage in, if they would be his Diſciples; that ſo their reſolving in *too* much haſte, might not give them Occaſion to repent at *leiſure*; as you may ſee at large *Luke* 14. 26—34. And elſewhere he compares *raſh* and *inconſiderate* Reſolvers, to a Man that goes about to build a Tower, without ever conſidering what it will coſt, or whether he hath Money ſufficient to finiſh it; and ſo when he hath laid the Foundation gives it over,

over, and renders himſelf *ridiculous*; and the *ſame* he compares alſo to a *King* that goes to war without ever conſidering whether he hath Force *enough* to encounter his Enemy, and ſo ruſhing headlong into the Battle, is either forced to *retreat*, or *yield* to the Mercy of the Conqueror. And in the *Parable* of the *Prodigal* Luke 15. wherein he purpoſely deſcribes the *whole* Progreſs of the Soul towards *God*; the firſt Thing the Prodigal did after he came to himſelf, was to conſider what an *happy* Change he ſhould make in his Condition by returning to his Father; *how many hired Servants of my Fathers have bread enough and to ſpare, and I periſh with hunger!* and having well conſidered *this*, he at length reſolves, *I will ariſe and go to my Father.* Thus alſo the Prophet *David* introduces his Reſolution of Amendment, through a *deep* and *ſerious* Conſideration of his ways, *I thought on my ways, and turned my Feet unto thy Teſtimonies.* Pſal. 119. 59.

4. It muſt be an *univerſal* Reſolution of obeying *God*, ſuch as indifferently extends to *all* the Inſtances of our Duty, otherwiſe it can be no *intire* Principle of Righteouſneſs; becauſe tho' it may reform us in *ſome* Inſtances, it muſt leave us unreformed in *others*, and ſo can only render us leſs *wicked*, but never intirely *good*. For ſeeing the *Chriſtian*

ſtion Law exacts of us *univerſal* Obedience, and doth not oblige us in *one* Inſtance, and diſpenſe with us in *another*; it is impoſſible that *any* Reſolution ſhould be the Principle of *that* Righteouſneſs it requires, but that which reſpects the whole. *If we keep the whole Law*, ſaith St. James, *and yet offend in one point, we are guilty of all*; for which he ſubjoyns this Reaſon, *he that hath ſaid, do not commit adultery; ſaid alſo, do not kill*, James 2. 10, 11. *i. e.* it is the *ſame* Authority that forbids the *one* as well as the *other*; and therefore, tho' thou doſt not the *one*, yet if thou doſt the *other*, thou ſinneſt againſt the Authority of both. Seeing therefore we are not accounted univerſally *righteous* by the Law of *Chriſt*, unleſs we do univerſally obey it, a *partial* Reſolution to obey can never conſtitute us Righteous; becauſe *ſuch* a Reſolution will never make us univerſally obedient. *Then ſhall I not be aſhamed*, ſaith David, *when I have reſpect unto all thy Commandmeuts*. Pſal. 119. 6. So that to make our Reſolution a *Chriſtian* Principle of Righteouſneſs, it is neceſſary that it ſhould be *univerſal*, *i. e.* of *equal* extent with *that* Law which is the Meaſure of our Righteouſneſs; that like a *fruitful* Womb it ſhould be *pregnant* with every *good* Work, and *vertually* contain in it every Particular that our *Religion* hath made our Duty.

5. It

5. It must be a *prevailing* Resolution; a Resolution of such Force as doth engage us to *do* what we resolve, and actually prevails over all Temptations to the contrary. For all the Vertue of a *good* Resolution consists in its Relation to Action, because if *that* we resolve to do, be not *necessary*, it is *indifferent* whether we resolve to do it or no; but if it be, it must be done, otherwise we had been as good *never* to have resolved to do it. The *goodness* of our Resolution therefore consists in *this*, that it is an Engagement to practise what we resolve; and consequently if our Resolution to obey God, be not prevalent enough to engage us to obey him, it is so far from being a *true* Principle of *Christian* Righteousness, that it is a meer *insignificant* Cypher. For as *that* can be no *Cause* which produces no *Effect*; so that can be no Principle of Righteousness, which is not productive of it; and if to make it a Principle of Righteousness, it is necessary, that it should be a *prevalent* Engagement to a *righteous* Life, then it follows that when it ceases to be prevalent, it ceases to be a Principle of Righteousness; and consequently that whenever we do commit any *Sin* that is inconsistent with a *prevailing* Resolution to obey *God*, we do for that Time cease to be *righteous* Men. But there are no *Sins* inconsistent with a *prevailing* Re-

ſolution to obey *God*, but ſuch as do prevail againſt it, and actually *over-power* it; and therefore as for thoſe *Weakneſſes*, *Surreptions*, and *Surprizes*, which, for Diſtinction-ſake, we call *Sins of Infirmity*; either we do not conſent to them, and conſequently they are ſo far from *over-powering* our *good* Reſolution, that they do not at all *conteſt* with it; or if we do conſent to them, it is unawares, before we can *oppoſe* our Reſolution againſt them. So that tho' upon Surprize they do win our Conſent, yet they do not win it from our *good* Reſolution, which in this *ſuddain* Hurry of Thoughts had not time to canvas for it; but had Power enough to have obtained it, had it had but Opportunity to prefer its Claim; and therefore as for ſuch *Sins* as theſe, they may fairly comport with a *prevailing* Reſolution of Obedience. But then there are *Sins of Wilfulneſs* which proceed either from *wilful* Habits, or from *deliberate* Choice, and theſe are no *more* conſiſtent with *ſuch* a Reſolution, than *one* Contrary is with *another* in the ſame Degree. For he who *ſins* wilfully is prevalently reſolved to ſin; and to be ſo, and at the ſame time prevalently reſolved to obey *God* is a Contradiction in Terms. Whilſt therefore *Sin* hath the Prevalence in us, we are ſo long *Servants* of *Sin*, and do *ſo* long ceaſe to be *Servants* of *Righteouſneſs*. 'Tis true,

true, there are Degrees of *Wickedneſs*, and the longer a Man continues *wicked*, the worſe he will be; but ſtill he is a *wicked* Man, who is *more* prevalently reſolved to *ſin* than to obey God; and he who is ſo, tho' but for an *Hour* or a *Day*, is ſo long wicked, as well as he who continues *ſo* for a *Month* or a *Year*: He is not wicked indeed to ſo *high* a Degree, and ſo may far more eaſily recover; but from the Time that we deliberately conſent to any *known* Sin, to the Time that we repent of it, we are *wilful* Sinners. If we repent immediately, we immediately recover into that *good* Eſtate from whence we were fallen, and ſo our Wound is cured almoſt as ſoon as it is made. For the *proper* Repentance of *ſingle* Acts of *wilful* Sin, is either to reſolve not to repeat them, or, where it can be done, to undo them again by Reſtitution. But when our *baffled* Reſolution to obey *God* is thus recover'd into a *prevalent* Engagement to obey him, it revives into a *living* Principle of Righteouſneſs; but yet before we can reaſonably conclude it is ſuch, we muſt make ſome *Tryal* of it; for as it is certain, that until it be Prevalent, it is not a *true* Principle of Righteouſneſs; ſo it is certain, that till for ſome time it hath actually prevailed, we cannot be *ſecure* that it is prevalent. That is not to be called a *prevalent*

Reſolution, that for a *Day* or a *Week* puts us into a *Fit* of *Religion*, and ſo expires; ſuch *flaſhy* Purpoſes are ſo far from being *thorough* Cures, that they are only ſo many *Intermiſſions* of our Diſeaſe, that always leave us as *bad* or *worſe* than they found us. But if upon *ſufficient* Tryal we find that our Reſolution doth hold againſt *all* Temptations, and actually engage us to our Duty in deſpite of *all* Sollicitations to the contrary, we may then ſafely conclude, that it is *that* very *vital* Principle, which in the Judgment of our *holy Religion*, doth conſtitute us Righteous Men. And accordingly *Matth.* 21. 28, 29, 30. our *Saviour* compares thoſe who might, but did not enter into the *Kingdom of Heaven*, to a *Son* that *firſt* reſolved to go whither his Father commanded him, but *afterwards* cooled and did not obey; implying, that the *great* Fault, which ſpoiled his Reſolution, and rendred it inſignificant was this, that it was not *firm* and *prevalent*; which had it been, it had actually entered him in the *Kingdom* of *Heaven*.

6. And laſtly, It muſt be a Reſolution to obey God, ſpringing out of our Belief of the *Chriſtian Religion*; and this it is which renders it *ſtrictly* and *properly*, a *Chriſtian* Principle of Righteouſneſs. 'Tis true indeed, if either we *never* heard of *Chriſtianity*, or it had never been propoſed to us, with *ſufficient*

ficient Motives of *Credibility*, our Infidelity would have been only our Miſery, but not our Crime; and if upon a *through* Conſideration of the Arguments of *natural Religion*, and of the *Good* and *Evil* which naturally ſprings out of *good* and *evil* Actions, we were effectually reſolved to ſtudy the Will of *God*, and, ſo far as we underſtood it, to obey it; it had been no *criminal* Defect in our Reſolution not to be founded upon our Belief of *Chriſtianity*; becauſe to believe without *ſufficient* Reaſon, is ſo far from being our Duty, that it is our Defect, and an Argument of our *Weakneſs*, and *fooliſh* Credulity. But now that *Chriſtianity* hath been made known, and ſufficiently propoſed to us, we cannot be *good* Men, unleſs we do believe it, and if we do believe it, we cannot be *good* Chriſtians if we do not thereupon effectually reſolve to obey it. In ſhort therefore, they who have not the *Goſpel*, are obliged to obey *God* upon the Motives of *natural Religion*, which is all that can reaſonably be expected from them; but as for *us* who have the *Goſpel*, wherein, together with the Arguments of Nature, *God* hath fairly propoſed to us the *higher* Motives of *Chriſtianity*, we are bound to believe *theſe* as well as *thoſe*; and upon this Belief to proceed to a *firm* Reſolution of Obedience; which if we do, our Reſolution is ſtrictly *Chriſtian*

in Contra-diſtinction to theirs who have not the Goſpel, and ſo reſolve only upon Principles of *Natural Reaſon*; not but that their Reſolution is for ſubſtance the *ſame* with ours, only *ours* is founded upon *greater* and more *prevalent* Motives. The Duties of *Chriſtianity* are the ſame with thoſe of *Natural Religion*, and excepting thoſe three *poſitive* Precepts, of *Baptiſm* and the *Lords Supper*, and of worſhipping *God* in and through *Chriſt*, there is no Command in the *Goſpel* diſtinct from the *Eternal Rules* of *Morality* which the *Goſpel* doth improve upon *new* Principles, and ſtrengthen with more *powerful* Obligations.

And thus I have explained to you what is that *Vital* Form and Principle which, in the Senſe of the Law of *Chriſt*, doth conſtitute us *Righteous* Men. In ſhort, he is a *Righteous* Man in the true *Chriſtian* Senſe, who upon a *through* Conſideration of the Arguments and Motives of *Chriſtianity* is univerſally and prevalently reſolved to obey its Laws. To conclude all therefore, from hence I infer

1. What is the *true ſafe* Way for a Man to reſolve his *own* Conſcience concerning the *main* State of his *Soul*, whether in the *Goſpel*-ſenſe he be *Righteous*, or no. I know it is a common Doctrine with ſome Men, that the Reſolution of this *great* Caſe depends

pends upon an *inward Whiſper, Suggeſtion,* or *Teſtimony* of the *Spirit* of *God,* which I fear hath fatally deluded *too* many Men into a *groundleſs* Confidence and Aſſurance. For when all of a ſudden they feel themſelves ſurprized with *joyous* and *comfortable* Thoughts, they preſently conclude it to be an *inward Whiſper* and *Teſtimony* of the *Spirit* of *God,* when many times there is nothing in it but an *unaccountable* Friſque of *melancholy* Vapors heated and fermented by a *feveriſh* Humour; and many of theſe *ſudden* Joys and Dejections, which theſe Men interpret to be the *Incomes* and *With-drawings* of the *Spirit* of *God,* do apparently proceed from no *other* Cauſe than the Shiverings and Burnings of an Ague; upon which account *Hyſterical* Fits are frequently miſtaken for *ſpiritual* Exerciſes. And when Men have moſt confidently believed themſelves *overſhadowed* by the *Holy Ghoſt,* their Fancies have been only hagg'd and ridden by the *Enthuſiaſtick* Vapors of their own Spleen. And ſome times I make no doubt, but this *ſudden* Fluſh of *joyous* Thoughts proceeds from a *worſe* Principle, even from the ſuggeſtion of the *Devil*; who, tho' he hath no *immediate* Acceſs to the Minds of Men, can doubtleſs act upon their *Spirits* and *Humours,* and thereby *figure* their *Fancies* with ſprightly *Ideas,*

and *tickle* their *Hearts* into a Rapture; and this Power of *his* we may reaſonably ſuppoſe he is ready enough to exert upon any miſchievous Occaſion, when ever he finds a Man willing to be deceived, and to rely upon *ungrounded* Preſumptions. The *true* and only *ſafe* May therefore for a Man to reſolve himſelf is impartially to ſurvey himſelf, and to conſider whether in the *main* his Intentions and Actions are righteous. If you ask, by what *Signs* and *Tokens* ſhall a Man know this? I anſwer, there is nothing can be a *true* Sign of *Righteouſneſs* but *Righteouſneſs*, nothing but what is an Act or Inſtance of Righteouſneſs. But then we muſt have a great Care, that we do not argue from *particular* Acts and Inſtances that we are Righteous in the *main*; For you may as well conclude that you are not *blind*, becauſe you *hear* well, or that you are not *deaf*, becauſe you *ſee* well, or that you have *all* your Senſes, becauſe you have *one* or *two*, as that you are *Righteous* in the *main*, becauſe you are ſo in *this* or *that* particular. Well then, how ſhall we do to reſolve our ſelves in this moſt *material* Enquiry? Why do but conſider what it is to be *Righteous*, and then reflect upon *your own* Motion, and you will quickly feel whether you are *Righteous* or no; for to be *Righteous* is for the *main* to intend righteouſly, and act accordingly.

cordingly. If you ask again, how you ſhall know whether you *ſo* intend and act; I ſhall only anſwer, that it is an *unreaſonable* Queſtion, and that you might as well ask, whether you are *hungry* or *thirſty*; becauſe you do as *naturally* feel the Motions of your *Soul*, as thoſe of your *Body*; and for you to ask *another* Man what *your own* Intentions are, is to make him a *Conjurer* inſtead of a *Caſuiſt*. Would it not look extremely ridiculous for a Man to ask his *Creditor* or *Cuſtomer*, Good Sir, how ſhall I know whether I intend to pay my Debts, or am ſincerely reſolved not to over-reach you? Should any Man ask me *ſuch* a Queſtion, I ſhould only bid him conſult himſelf, and if then he ſuſpected his *own* Honeſty, truly I ſhould ſuſpect that he had *too* much Reaſon for it. For if a Man intends righteouſly, to be ſure he intends it *knowingly*; and if he knowingly intends it, he cannot but *know* he intends it; for if he cannot know that he doth it, it is becauſe he cannot know how to do it; and if he cannot know *how* to do it, he is not a *capable* Subject of *Morality*, but muſt of neceſſity *live* and *act* at random, and blunder on, like a Traveller in the dark, without being able to diſtinguiſh whether he goes *right* or *wrong*. Wherefore as you would not be deceived in a Point of the *higheſt* Importance in the world, a Point upon

upon which your *everlaſting* Fate depends, *viz.* whether you are *Righteous* Men or no; do not meaſure your ſelves by any *other* Rule, but *this* ſure and infallible one in the Text, *He that doth Righteouſneſs is righteous, even as he is righteous.*

2. From hence I infer, that ſeeing Righteouſneſs is the *good* State of our Souls, that the *main* Thing upon which we ought to value our ſelves is upon our being truly *Righteous.* For if we have any ſuch Thing as a *rational* and *immortal* Soul about us, it is doubtleſs by far the *nobleſt* Ingredient of our Beings; 'tis *that* by which we are near allyed to *Angels*, and do even border upon *God* himſelf. He therefore who values himſelf by any Thing but his *Soul*, and that which is its Grace and Perfection, begins at the *wrong* End of himſelf, forgets his *Jewels*, and eſtimates his Eſtate by his Lumber; in ſo much that one would think it impoſſible, did not *too* many *woful* Expeperiments daily evince the contrary, that any Creature owning and believing a *rational* and *immortal* Spirit to be a Part of its Being, ſhould be ſo ridiculous as to value it ſelf by ſuch *little trifling* Advantages as a *well-coloured* Skin, a Suit of *fine* Cloaths, a Puff of *Popular* Applauſe, a Bag of *red* or *white* Earth; and yet, *God* help us, theſe are the *only* Things almoſt by which we difference

ference our ſelves from one *another*. You are a much *better* Man than your Neighbour, who is a very *poor contemptible* Wretch, a *little creeping deſpicable* Animal, not worthy to be taken notice of by ſuch a one as you. Why in the name of *God*, Sir, what's the matter? Where is this *mighty* Difference between *you* and *him*? Hath he not a *Soul* as well as you, a *Soul* that is capable to live as *long* and be as *happy* as yours. Yes, that is true indeed; but notwithſtanding that, you thank *God* for it, you are another guize Man than he; for you have a much *handſomer* Body, your Apparel is *finer* and more *faſhionable*; you live in a more *ſplendid* Equipage, and have a *larger* Purſe to maintain it; and to your *great* Comfort, your Name is *more* in Vogue and makes a far *greater* Rattle in the World. And is this all the Difference then between your mighty *Self*, and your *poor* Neighbour? Alas, a *few* Days more will put an End to all this; and when your *rich* Attires are reduced to a *Winding-ſheet*, and all your *vaſt* Poſſeſſions to *ſix* Foot of Earth, what will become of all theſe *little* Trifles, by which you value your ſelves ſo highly? Where now will be the *Beauty*, the *Wealth*, the *Port* and *Garb*, of which you are ſo conceited? Alas, now that *lovely* Body will look as pale and gaſtly, that *lofty* Soul will be left as *bare*, as *poor*

and

and *naked*, as your *deſpiſed* Neighbours; and ſhould you now meet his wandring *Ghoſt* in the *vaſt* World of *Spirits*, what will you have left to boaſt of more than he; now that your *Beauty* is withered, your *Wealth* vaniſhed, and all your *outward Pomp* and *Splendor* buried in a *ſilent* Grave? Now you will have nothing left to diſtinguiſh you from the moſt *Contemptible*, unleſs you have *wiſer* and *better* Souls, which are the only Preheminencies above other Men that will ſurvive our *Funerals*, and diſtinguiſh us from *baſe* and *abject* Souls for ever. If we are now more *pious*, and *humble*, and *juſt*, and *charitable* than *other* Men, this will ſtick by us when our Heads are laid, and to all *Eternity* render us *glorious* and *happy*. And indeed when once we have thrown *off* our Body and all our *bodily* Paſſions and Neceſſities, the only *Goods* we ſhall be capable of enjoying are *God*, *our ſelves*, and the Society of *bleſſed Spirits*, and theſe are no otherwiſe enjoyable but only by Acts of *Piety* and *Vertue*. It is only by our *Contemplation* and *Worſhip*, our *Love* and *Imitation* of *God* that we can enjoy him; it is only by our *Prudence* and *Moderation*, our *Temperance* and *Humility* that we can enjoy *our ſelves*; it is only by our *Charity* and *Juſtice*, our *Modeſty*, *peaceable* and *mutual* Submiſſion and Condeſcention to one *another* that we

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can enjoy the *glorious* Society of *bleſſed Spirits*, but if our *unbodied* Spirits carry with them theſe *divine* Graces into the *other* World, we ſhall by them be poſſeſſed of every Thing our utmoſt Wiſhes can propoſe; of a *good God*, a *god-like*, *joyous* and *contented* Mind, a *peaceful*, *kind*, and *righteous* Neighbourhood, and ſo all above, within, and without us will be a *pure* and *perfect* Heaven. So that if when I go from hence to ſeek my fortune in the World of *Spirits*, *God* ſhould thus beſpeak me, *O man! ſeeing thou art now leaving all the Enjoyments of ſenſe, conſult what will do thee good, and thou ſhalt have whatever thou wilt ask to carry with thee into the ſpiritual State:* I ſay ſhould *God* thus offer me, I am ſure the utmoſt *Good* I could wiſely crave, would be this, *Lord give me a Heart inflamed with Love, and winged with Duty to thee, that thereby I may but enjoy thee; give me a ſober and a temperate Mind, that thereby I may enjoy my ſelf; give me a kind and peaceable and righteous Temper, that thereby I may enjoy the ſweet Society of bleſſed Spirits: O give me but theſe bleſſed Things, and thou haſt crowned all my Wiſhes, and to Eternity I will never ask any other Favour for my ſelf but only this, that I may continue a holy and a righteous Soul for ever; for ſo long as I continue ſo, I am ſure I ſhall enjoy all ſpiritual Goods, and be as happy as Heaven*

can

can make me. What a *prodigious* Piece of Folly therefore is it for Men to value themſelves more upon theſe *outward* Advantages, of which ere long they muſt be ſtript, than upon the *Graces* and *Vertues* of their own Minds, on which they muſt ſubſiſt for ever? Suppoſe now that you were a *Merchant* in a *far Country* where you were allowed for a ſhort *uncertain* Time the Benefit of *free* Trade and Commerce in order to your gaining a *good Eſtate* to maintain you in your own *Native Country*, when ever you are forced to return; would you be ſo indiſcreet as to lay out all the Product of your *Merchandize* in building *fine* Houſes, and purchaſing *great* Farms, when you know not how ſoon you may be commanded to depart and leave all theſe *immoveable Goods* behind you? Or rather would you not think your ſelves obliged by all the Rules of Intereſt and Diſcretion to convert all your Gain into *portable* Wealth, into Mony or Jewels or other ſuch *moveable* Commodities, as, when ever you are forced to depart, you might carry Home along with you, and there maintain your ſelves with them in many years *Eaſe* and *Plenty*? Do but think then, and think it often, that while you live *here* you are but *Strangers* and *Foreign Merchants*; that you came *hither* from *another* World, to which you know

know not how ſoon you may be forced to return; that all the Wealth, the Lands and Houſes you gain by your *preſent* Commerce are *immoveable Goods* which you muſt leave behind you when you go from *hence*, and that there is nothing portable of all that you can gain in this World but only the *Graces* and *Vertues* of your Minds, and that therefore while you have Opportunity it concerns you above all Things to ſtore and treaſure up a *plentiful* Portion of theſe; that ſo whenever you are ſhipt *off* into the *eternal* World you may carry ſuch an Eſtate of them thither with you as may ſuffice to maintain you there in *Glory* and *Happineſs* for ever; which God of his infinite Mercy grant.

1 JOHN III. 9.

Whoſoever is born of God, doth not commit ſin; for his ſeed remaineth in him, and he cannot ſin becauſe he is born of God.

FOR the right underſtanding of theſe Words, it will be *neceſſary* to enquire, *firſt*, what is here meant by *committing Sin*; *ſecondly*, what is meant by being *born of God*; *thirdly*, in what ſenſe he that is *born of God* cannot *commit ſin*.

Firſt, what is *here* meant by *committing ſin*? I anſwer, that this *Phraſe* in the Writings of this our *Apoſtle* hath a ſpecial *Energy*, and doth not denote the *ſimple* doing of any *ſinful* Action, tho' it be out of Ignorance, Incogitance, or Frailty; nor doth it only denote an *habitual* Courſe and Cuſtom of ſinning *wilfully*, but primarily the doing of any *ſinful* Action whatſoever *deliberately*, *wilfully*, and *preſumptuouſly*. For as for the *firſt*, it is not true that he that is *born of God* doth commit no *ſin* at all; ſeeing the *beſt* of God's Children are liable to be ſurpriz'd into *evil* Actions through their Weakneſs, Ignorance, or Inadvertency, of all which, there

there are *ſome* Remains even in the moſt *purified* Natures. And as for the *ſecond*, viz. the *habit* of ſinning wilfully, tho' *that* in the Apoſtles Senſe is not only to *commit ſin*, but to commit it in the moſt *eminent* Degree; yet it is plain, that it is the *deliberate* Acts of Sin that he here primarily intends: for ſo Verſe the 4th *he that committeth ſin tranſgreſſeth the Law, for Sin is a Tranſgreſſion of the Law*; which is plainly meant of every *ſingle* Act of wilful Sin. So ver. 8. *he that committeth ſin is of the Devil*, that is, he is therein an Imitator of the *Devil*, which is true of every *deliberate Act*, as well as of the *Habit* of Sin. So here in the Text, *he that is born of God doth not commit ſin*; that is, underſtanding him ſtill in the ſame Senſe, he doth not commit any *wilful* and *deliberate* Act of Sin.

2. Our *next* Enquiry is, what is *here* meant by *being born of God*? To which I anſwer, that to be *born* of *another*, denotes in general our receiving the Beginning and Principle of our Life and Motion from him, and conſequently to be *born of God*, is to receive from *him* through the Operation of his *Grace* and *Spirit*, the Beginning and Principle of our *ſpiritual* Life and Motion, *viz.* a *conſiderate, univerſal, prevailing* Reſolution to obey *God*, proceeding from our Belief of the *Chriſtian* Religion. When there-

therefore *God* by the Influence of his *Grace* and *Spirit* hath wrought *our* Minds into *ſuch* a Reſolution, then are we truly born of him, as having herein received from him the Principle of a *new* Life and Motion. And this the Apoſtle expreſſes by *being tranſformed by the renewing of our mind.* Rom. 12. 2. *i. e.* having a *new practical* Judgment and Reſolution of *Soul* begotten in us; and this he elſewhere calls *the renewing of the holy Ghoſt* Tit. 3. 5. Upon which account we may very well be ſaid to be *born of God*; becauſe it is from his *bleſſed Spirit* that we derive *this Renewing*, which is the Principle of our *ſpiritual* Life and Motion.

Our *laſt* Enquiry is in what Senſe *this* Aſſertion of the Apoſtle holds, *viz.* That he who is *thus born of God cannot ſin?* To which I anſwer, That this Expreſſion, *he cannot*, relates to the ſtate he is *now* in; he *cannot*, as he is *one* that is born of *God*, and while he doth continue ſo; for ſo the *Phraſe* is frequently uſed in *Scripture.* So *Rom.* 8. 7. *The carnal mind cannot be ſubject to God*; not but the Mind which is *now* carnal, may *hereafter* be ſubject unto God, *viz.* when it is *renewed* and *changed*; but it cannot be ſo while it continues *carnal.* And in the ſame Senſe he tells us in the next Verſe, that *it cannot pleaſe God.* So *Matth.* 7. 18. *a good Tree cannot bring forth evil Fruit, neither can a corrupt Tree bring*

bring forth good Fruit; which can *import* no more than this, that whilſt the *good* Tree continues good, it cannot bring forth *evil* Fruits, nor the *corrupt* Tree bring forth *good* Fruits whilſt it continues corrupt; not but that *one* may *hereafter* become *evil*, and bring forth evil Fruits, as well as the *other* may become a *good* Tree, and bring forth good Fruits. So that the meaning of *he cannot ſin*, is no more than this, it is ſo *utterly* inconſiſtent with the State of *one* that is *born of God*, to ſin wilfully and deliberately, that when ever he doth ſo, he actually falls from that *bleſſed* State, and for the time ceaſes to be *born of God*. And hence the Reaſon aſſigned why a Man cannot ſin wilfully, and be *born* of God at the ſame Time, is, *for his Seed remaineth in him*; that is, becauſe that Principle of *new* Life and Motion, which the *divine* Spirit hath produced in him, and which is nothing elſe but an *univerſal*, *prevailing* Reſolution of obeying *God*, remains within his Breaſt, and for a Man to be *univerſally* and *prevalently* reſolved to obey *God*, and at the ſame Time to ſin *wilfully* is a *Contradiction* in Terms; becauſe whenever he ſins *wilfully*, he is prevalently reſolved to diſobey him. And therefore ſeeing in every *wilful* Sin we are *prevalently* reſolved to diſobey *God*, while we are ſo, our Reſolution to obey him,

which is the Seed and Principle of our *divine* Life, muſt *neceſſarily* be extinguiſhed; and conſequently, till ſuch time as by our Repentance we have revived and recovered it, we muſt ceaſe to be *born of God.* He therefore who is *born of God,* cannot *ſin wilfully,* becauſe while he continues in *this* State *his Seed remains in him*; which is no more reconcilable to our *ſinning wilfully,* than *contraries* are in the *ſame* Degree. And therefore he adds, *he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God*; that is, his State is ſuch as will no more admit him wilfully to diſobey *God,* than to be *dead* and *alive* in the ſame Moment. But in purſuance of this Argument, it will be neceſſary yet further to enquire what thoſe *wilful* Sins are which the Apoſtle here declares to be inconſiſtent with a *good* State, or which is the ſame thing, with our *being born* of God; the Reſolution of which is of *abſolute* neceſſity to enable Men to make a *true* Judgment of their own State, whether it be *good* or *bad.* And in order hereunto it will be neceſſary to premiſe the following Particulars.

1. That by *wilful* Sin, I mean the *Acts* as well as the *Habits* of Sin.
2. That by *wilful* Habits of Sin, I mean ſuch as are contracted by *wilful* Acts, and are wilfully retained and indulged.

3. That

3. That by *wilful* Acts of Sin, I do not mean all *evil* Actions which have any Degree of *Will* in them, but only ſuch as are deliberately choſen.

4. That the *ſame* Actions may be Sins of *Weakneſs*, and Sins of *Wilfulneſs* in the *ſame*, or *different* Perſons under *different* Circumſtances.

1. That by *wilful* Sins, I mean the *wilful Acts* as well as *Habits* of Sin. To be ſure there is no Sin can be conſiſtent with our being *born of God*, for which the *Goſpel* binds us over to *eternal* Condemnation; for while we *thus* ſtand bound, we are Children of *Wrath*, and ſo cannot be Children of *God* at the ſame time. Now the Law of *Chriſt* condemns us for all *wilful* Sins whatſoever, whether they be *ſingle Acts* or *Habits*; and every *ſingle wilful* Act is as much a Tranſgreſſion of the Law, which threatens Condemnation, as any *wilful* Habit whatſoever. The Law, which forbids *wilful* Lying under the Penalty of *eternal* Death, doth as well forbid the *ſingle* Act, as the Habit of *wilful* Lying, and therefore muſt forbid them both under the ſame Penalty; and indeed if it did not, there are ſome of the moſt *heinous* ſins would eſcape. For there are *ſome* Sins which when Men have *once* committed, they never have Opportunity to repeat, being prevented either for want of a *new* Occaſion.

or by *juſt* Sentence of Law; ſuch as *Rape*, and *Theft*, and *Murther*; and *others*, which can never paſs beyond a *ſingle* Act, ſuch as *Parricide* and *Self-murther*; and ſo can never grow into an Habit: and yet I think there is no Man can doubt but that even the *ſingle Acts* of theſe Sins (ſuppoſing them wilful) do put a Man into a *ſtate* of Condemnation. I know it is uſually ſaid, that ſuch *horrible* Sins as *theſe* indeed do ſo, becauſe the Miſchief of them is *ſo* great, and the Malice *ſo* heinous that it renders them *equivalent* to an *Habit* of any other Sin. To which I anſwer, the Law of *Chriſt* condemns theſe *Sins*, not as they are greater than *others*, but as they are Tranſgreſſions for which it threatens Condemnation. Indeed the greatneſs of the *Sin* doth increaſe the Condemnation; but yet the Law which condemns us for a *leſſer* Sin, doth as certainly condemn us, as *that* which condemns us for a *greater*. As for Inſtance, the Law of *Chriſt* as well condemns us for *Drunkenneſs*, *Adultery*, *Lying*, and *Malice*, as for *Murther*. And as every *wilful Act* of *unjuſt* Killing, is Murther; ſo every *wilful* Act of Adultery and Malice, is Adultery and Malice; and therefore the Law of *Chriſt* condemns to far *greater* Pains for the *one* than for the *others*; yet ſtill it condemns us for both: for that Law, which forbids any *wilful* Sin indifferently under the Penal-

Penalty of Condemnation, forbids every *Act* of it under the *ſame* Penalty; becauſe every *Act* of it is the Sin ſo forbidden; and therefore we may as well ſay, that the Law of *Chriſt* doth not condemn us for *Parricide* and *Self-murther*, becauſe theſe are only *ſingle Acts* of Murther, as that it doth not condemn us for any other *ſingle Act* of any other *wilful* Sin. For every *ſingle Act* of *wilful* Intemperance and Incontinency, are as truly *Sins* againſt the Law, which forbids them under the Penalty of *eternal* Condemnation, as thoſe *ſingle Acts* of Murther are againſt the Law which forbids Murther under the ſame Penalty; and conſequently do as *well* put us into a State of Condemnation; and to be ſure, while we are in *this* ſtate, we cannot pretend to be *born of God*.

2. I premiſe that by *wilful Habits* of *ſin*, are meant *ſuch* as are contracted by *wilful Acts*, and are wilfully retained, and indulged. For if you take *Habits* of Sin in the *largeſt* Senſe, as they ſignifie a *forward* Propenſity, Promptneſs, and Readineſs to *do* Evil, there is no doubt but there may be *ſinful* Habits in Men, which never were contracted by *wilful Acts*, as on the contrary, there may be *ſinful Habits* contracted by *wilful Acts*, which tho' not utterly extirpated, may yet ceaſe to be wilful. As for inſtance, a Man may be prompted to *unreaſo-*

nable Anger, or *exceſſive Luſt*, even from the *natural* Temper and Conſtitution of his Body, without the Concurrence of any *wilful Acts* of his own; and tho' he may be much more diſpoſed to be angry or luſtful than *another* of a *cooler* Conſtitution, yet he may be much farther removed from any *wilful Habit* of Anger and Luſt, becauſe the *latter* perhaps contracted them by his own *wilful Acts*, and by his repeated Practice of them, doth ſtill cheriſh and indulge them; whereas the *former* had no more hand in contracting them, than he had in the moulding of of *his own* Conſtitution, and is ſo far from cheriſhing them by any *wilful Acts* of his own, that it is the *main* endeavour of his Life to oppoſe and vanquiſh them. And ſo on the other hand, a Man that by frequent *wilful Acts* of Sin, hath contracted *wilful Habits*, may afterwards heartily repent, and take up a *prevailing* Reſolution of Amendment, and yet ſtill *the evil Habit*, the *Promptneſs*, or *Propenſity* to his Sin, may be more or leſs remaining in him; but this is *now ſo* far from being wilful, that the prevailing Bent and Current of his Will is againſt it; and tho' ſtill his *evil* Inclinations are ready to take fire upon every *Spark* of Temptation that falls upon them, and to *blaze* out into *evil* Actions: yet by the Strength of his Reſolution he *ſo* keeps it under, that it cannot break

break forth but upon a ſurprize, and even *that* Surprize will render him more *watchful* and *vigilant* to ſuppreſs it for the future. But now when *evil Habits* do not only exiſt *in* us, but are alſo cheriſhed and indulged by us, and do ordinarily influence and govern our Practice; they are then not only *wilful* Sins, but a *fixt* and *ſettled* State of *wilful* Sin; and are pregnant with a *diſtinct* Guilt and Venom from thoſe *Acts* of *wilful* Sin, that begot them. And hence in Scripture you find them markt with the *blackeſt* Characters; they are called, *the Root of bitterneſs, the evil Heart, the Concupiſcence wrought by Sin, the Law in the Members*, which thoſe who are *carnal and ſold under Sin* do obey, *the carnal Mind, the Fleſh in which dwells no good, and enmity to God:* by all which they are *ſufficiently* pronounced inconſiſtent with our being *born of God.*

3. I muſt premiſe that by *wilful Acts* of *Sin* I do not mean all *wilful* Actions which have any Degree of *Will* in them, but only ſuch as are *deliberately* choſen and conſented to. Every *ſin* is ſo far *voluntary*, as that when we chooſe it we are free to refuſe it; otherwiſe it is *neceſſary*; and what is *neceſſary*, is no Fault, nor can be juſtly liable to *Reward*, or *Puniſhment*. Thoſe *evil* Actions therefore, which, for Diſtinction ſake, are called *ſins of Infirmity*, are no farther

Sins

Sins than as they are choſen, and have ſome Intermixture of Will in them; for if they have none, they have only the *Matter* of Sin in them, but not the *Form*. But we are ſeldom ſo *ſurprized* with any Temptation to *Evil*, but that it is poſſible for us to deliberate upon it, and thereupon to reſolve againſt it; and many Times by our Care and Watchfulneſs we do prevent thoſe *Evils*, which, when we are more remiſs, do ſteal upon us *unawares*: and we that can prevent them *this* Moment, can prevent them the *next* too, and ſo the next, and ſo *for ever*. But then conſidering the *Weakneſs* and *Imperfection* of *our* Natures, how our *Wills* are byaſſed with *bad* Habits and Inclinations, and our *Thoughts* diſperſed and ſquander'd among the *infinite* Diverſions that ſurround us; it is morally impoſſible, that is, it is not reaſonably to be expected that in theſe Circumſtances we ſhould be *always* upon our Guard againſt every *evil* Object *without*, and every *evil* Motion *within* us, ſo as never to be ſurprized, or to act unadviſedly. Whenever therefore we are ſo ſurprized into an *evil* Action, as that we could not conſider if we would, either for Want of Time, or for Want of *Order* and *Diſtinction* in our Thoughts occaſioned by ſome *ſuddain* Tumult of Paſſion; *this* is not our Fault, but our Infelicity; becauſe our *Will* is no way con-

concerned in it. But when we are ſo ſurprized, as that notwithſtanding we might have conſidered, had we taken all *due* Care to recollect *our ſelves* and exert our *utmoſt* Attention; *this* is partly *our* Fault; becauſe there is ſomething of Will in it; but more *our* Infelicity, becauſe there is more of Weakneſs and Infirmity than Will in it; and therefore is called a *ſin of Infirmity*, which by the *merciful* Indulgence of the *Goſpel* is diſcharged of Courſe from all *eternal* Penalties. But if when we are tempted, we either deſignedly omit to conſider, or conſent upon Conſideration; this is *pure* Malice of Will, which, while we are *born of God*, can have no Place in us.

4. And laſtly, I muſt premiſe, that the ſame Actions may be *Sins of Weakneſs* and *Sins of Wilfulneſs* in the *ſame*, or in *different* Perſons under different Circumſtances. For ſeeing it is the *willing* of an *evil* Action that makes it be a ſin, it neceſſarily follows, that it is the *willing* of it in a *greater* or a *leſſer* Degree that makes it a *greater* or a *leſſer* Sin; and it is certain that the ſame ſin may have *more* or *leſs* of Will in it in the *ſame*, or *different* Perſons under different Circumſtances. As for Inſtance; *one* Man may be excuſably ignorant of the *Evil* of ſuch an Action, which *another* doth either know to be a Sin, or would have known it had he not

not been wilfully ignorant; and that Sin, which *this* Man commits upon Deliberation, *another* may be hurried into on a ſuddain ſurprize, in which Caſe, tho' both do the ſame Act, and in ſome Senſe both do it willingly too; yet becauſe the *one* wills it more intenſely than the *other*, it is a *Sin of Wilfulneſs* in the *one*, and a *Sin of Infirmity* in the *other*. And this holds true alſo in the *ſame* Perſon, who may do the *ſame* Action ignorantly and inconſiderately at *one* Time, and knowingly and adviſedly at *another*; and if, when he hath fallen into any Sin unawares, he is wilfully careleſs and neglective to prevent the Return of it; that which *now* is a *pitiable* Weakneſs, and as ſuch falls under the *general* Indulgence of the *Goſpel*, will *anon* be *inexcuſable* Obſtinacy. From all which it is apparent, that is not the Kind of the Sin but the *Will* of the Sinner that makes the Difference between *Sins of Weakneſs* and *Wilfulneſs*; ſeeing the ſame Sins according to the *different* Degrees of Will that are in them may be *Sins of Infirmity* at *one* time, and *Sins of Obſtinacy* at *another*. For ſo by the *Law* of *England* the ſame *Act* of Killing is diſtinguiſhed into *Chance-medly*, *Manſlaughter*, and *Murther*; the *firſt* of which is *innocent*, becauſe it hath no Will in it; the *ſecond pitiable*, becauſe but imperfectly willed; the *third ca-*

pital,

pital, becauſe freely choſen, and fully conſented to. And ſo alſo by the *Chriſtian Law* the very ſame Act under *different* Circumſtances may be an *innocent* Error, a *ſin of Infirmity*, and a *ſin of Wilfulneſs*; for if it be perfectly *involuntary*, it is an *innocent Error*; if imperfectly *willed*, it is a *ſin of Infirmity*; but if fully conſented to, a *ſin of Wilfulneſs*. So long therefore as the Temptations of Men are ſo infinitely *various*, and their Capacities of reſiſting ſo *unequal*, in different Perſons, there will be *more* or *leſs* of Will in the *ſame* Actions; and the ſame *Act* will be far more excuſable where there is a *greater* Temptation to it, and a *leſs* Power of reſiſting, then it can be, when the Temptation is *leſs*, and the Power of reſiſting it *greater*. All that can be done therefore in the Caſe before us is this, to lay down ſuch *general* Rules of Diſtinction between *Sins of Infir-mity*, and *Sins of Wilfulneſs*, as that thereby every Man, that hath the *free* Uſe of *his own* Faculties may, upon a *due* Conſideration of his *Particular* Circumſtances, diſtinguiſh whether his *Sin* be *wilful* or no. For when all is done every Man muſt thus far be *his own Caſuiſt*; it being impoſſible for *another* to determine what Degrees of *Will* there are in his Sin, unleſs he knew under what Circumſtances he committed it; becauſe *different* Circum-

Circumſtances do vary the Caſe, and make the Sin to be *more* or *leſs* voluntary.

Theſe Things premiſed, I come now particularly to ſtate what thoſe Sins are, upon the Commiſſion of which we ceaſe to be *born of God:* and theſe I ſhall rank under 3 Heads: 1. Sins of *wilful* Ignorance. 2. Sins of *wilful* Inconſideration. 3. Sins againſt *Knowledge* and *Conſideration.*

1. Sins of *wilful* Ignorance; I ſay wilful, to exclude all *invincible* and *unaffected* Ignorance: By *invincible* Ignorance I mean ſuch, as we neither do nor can ſurmount by the *utmoſt* Improvement we can make of our Reaſon. For ſure not to underſtand, *what* we cannot underſtand, is not all *criminal*; and if our Ignorance be *innocent*, whatever is the *neceſſary Effect* of it muſt be ſo too; all *neceſſary Effects* being of a *common* Nature with their *Cauſes*. And certainly no Man breathing can be innocent, if *he* be not ſo who acts to the *beſt* of his Knowledge, and knows to the *beſt* of his Capacity For ſo our *Saviour* himſelf pronounces concerning the *Phariſees*; *If ye were blind ye ſhould have no ſin, but now you ſay that you ſee, therefore your ſin remains*, John 9. 4.

By *unffected* Ignorance I mean ſuch as is *vincible*, but by Reaſon of ſome *innocent* Hindrances, ſuch as the Obſcurity of the *Object*, or the Weakneſs of the *Capacity*, or the

the *innocent* Prejudice and Prepoſſeſſion of the *Underſtanding*, is not to be removed without *extreme* Difficulty; which tho' it be ſo far ſinful, as it is within the *Reach* of our Power to be better informed; yet is by no Means to be accounted a *wilful* Sin. For if it be *wilful* Sin not to know and do the Will of *God* to the *utmoſt* of our Power, there is no Sin in the World but what is *wilful*; becauſe it is no Sin at all not to do more than our utmoſt. But then there is a *wilful* and *affected* Ignorance, which proceeds either from our *prophane* Contempt and Regardleſsneſs of *God*, by which we have ſo far extinguiſhed our *natural* Senſe of *Religion*, as not to think it *worth* the while to concern our ſelves about it, and ſo rudely ſtop our Ears againſt all the *Means* of Inſtruction; or elſe this *wilful* Ignorance ariſes from ſome *ſinful* Prejudice againſt the Knowledge of the Truth begotten in us by ſome *darling* Luſt, which, that we may quietly enjoy without any *Remorſe* of Conſcience, we induſtriouſly ſhun all the *Means* of Conviction; and either exclude all Thoughts of *Religion* from our Minds leſt they ſhould diſcover to us the *Evil* and *Danger* of our Sin, (which is the way of thoſe who are openly *prophane*, and *irreligious*;) or indeavour to wheadle our own Underſtandings to ſuch *falſe* Opinions as are *ſoft* and

and *eaſy* and *indulgent* to our Luſts, (which is the way of *Hypocrites* and *falſe* Pretenders to *Religion.*) Now as for this Sort of Ignorance, it ſprings from a *wicked* Will, and is not ſo much to be imputed to the *Weakneſs* of our Underſtandings, as to the *Depravedneſs* of our Affections; they are the *impure* Vapours from *below* that cloud the Sky *above*, and overcaſt the *intellectual* Region with Darkneſs and Confuſion. And if we are ignorant of our Duty, becauſe we will not be informed; our Ignorance is ſo far from excuſing our Neglect of it, that it ſelf is *inexcuſable.* If I commit a Sin, becauſe I am wilfully ignorant, the Wilfulneſs of my Ignorance makes my Sin to be *wilful.* Here the *Effect* always partakes of the Nature of the *Cauſe*, and derives into its ſelf all its Venom and Malignity; and therefore if my Ignorance be a *wilful Sin*, whatever Sins it betrays me into, they muſt be *all* wilful as well as that. And hence our *Saviour* tells us, that this *is the condemnation*, that *light is come into the world*, and *men love darkneſs rather than light*, John 3. 19.

2. Another Sort of *wilful Sins* are Sins of *wilful Inconſideration.* I ſay wilful, becauſe there are ſundry *Evils* whereinto we are perfectly ſurprized; as when Temptations ſtart out ſo ſuddainly upon us, as that either for Want of Time, or the *great* Hurry and Tumult

Tumult it puts our Thoughts into, it is not in our Power to conſider and deliberate; in which Caſe we are not *capable* Subjects of *Law* and *Morality*. For that which makes us *capable* Subjects is firſt, that we are *rational* Agents, and ſo can deliberate what is beſt to chooſe. 2. That we are *free* Agents, and ſo can chooſe what is *beſt* upon Deliberation; without which *Madmen* and *natural Fools* are as *capable* Subjects of Law as we. Whenever therefore our Circumſtances are ſuch that we cannot deliberate, and chooſe upon Deliberation, tho' the Actions we do are *materially* Evils, yet are they not *formally* Sins; becauſe while we do them we are not *capable* Subjects of the *Law* that forbids them, nor conſequently accountable to it. As for Inſtance; it is doubtleſs a *great* Sin and deſerves a *great* Puniſhment, for a Man to wound his *Friend*, or abuſe his *Benefactor*; but yet in a *Madman* it is no Sin at all, becauſe when he doth it, he is incapable of being governed by the *Law* that forbids it. And this I judge is the Caſe of Men under *perfect* ſurprizes, when they are violently hurried into *evil* Actions in a *ſuddain* Diſtraction and Confuſion of Thoughts; which doubtleſs may ſometimes be the Caſe of very *good* Men, eſpecially under *great* Pains, or the ſuddain Appearance of *frightful* Dangers, which

for the *preſent* at leaſt may diſtract and ſcare them out of all Capacity and Deliberation; and at *other* Times, while their Thoughts are *innocently* wandring among the *vaſt* Variety of *outward* Objects, a Temptation may ſuddainly break in, and prevail upon them before they have Time to recollect themſelves. For we find by Experience, that the *Mind* hath not that *abſolute* Dominion over the *Will* as to make it chooſe or refuſe at its beck upon the *bare* Propoſal of *good* or *evil* Objects; but many Times before it can prevail is fain to diſpute it *out* with our Paſſions and Appetites, and to oppoſe their Importunities with more *prevalent* Motives to the contrary; and therefore if it ſhould ſo fall out that in that Moment when the Temptation comes, the Mind ſhould be very much *diverted* by *other* Imployments, it is in many Caſes *morally* impoſſible, but *Paſſion* and *Appetite* ſhould prevail, and obtain our Conſent before the *Mind* is aware of it; becauſe *that* being at preſent otherwiſe imployed; and always unable to attend *many* Things at once, it cannot be ready in the *preſent* Exigence immediately to urge the Arguments on its *own* ſide, and to detect the Fallacies on the *other*. Tho' this I confeſs, will hardly hold in any *groſs Acts* of Sin, becauſe in theſe there is generally ſome *Pauſe* and *Interval* between the Temptation

ptation and the Action, wherein the Mind may eaſily be adviſed with, which if it be a *good* Mind cannot fail to ſuggeſt *ſufficient* Arguments againſt it: But if the Temptation doth ſo hurry the Man, as that he cannot deliberate, he is *ſo* far *innocent*; and if as ſoon as he conſiders he retracts the *evil* Conſent into which his Will was ſurprized, before it paſſes into Action; or if having acted it, before he was *aware*, he becomes more *wary* and *watchful* for the future, it is not ſo much his Fault as his Miſery. 'Tis true, there are ſurprizes of Temptation which are not *innocent*; but then the Reaſon *is*, becauſe they are not *pure* ſurprizes, but ſuch as do not incapacitate us to deliberate; and if when it is in our Power we either do not deliberate at all, or not enough, but make a *raſh* and *fooliſh* Choice, when, if we had uſed our *utmoſt* Care, we might have choſen more adviſedly; our Choice is *culpable*, and ſo is the Action thence proceeding. But ſeeing ours is the *Religion* of *Men* and not of *Angels*, and it cannot reaſonably be expected, conſidering our Circumſtances, that we ſhould *always* do as well as poſſibly we can, it is to be ſuppoſed that this *Religion* of ours, which is purpoſely accommodated to our *imperfect* State, admits us to be *good* in the *Main*, tho' we are not ſo to *Perfection*, or which is the ſame Thing,

to the *utmoſt* of our Poſſibility. For while our Soul is fain to miniſter to a Body, and hath ſo *quick* a ſenſe of its Neceſſities, and while we are incompaſſed with ſo *vaſt* a Variety of *tempting* Objects, and our Thoughts are ſo diſperſed and ſquandred among them; it is *morally* impoſſible, but that *many* of our Actions ſhould be *unadviſed*, and paſs our Watch without a *ſevere* Examination: nor can it reaſonably be expected, that we ſhould in all Caſes, where it is in our Power, ſo preciſely weigh every *minute* Circumſtance of our Actions, as to determine exactly on which ſide our duty lies; and therefore ſhould our *Religion* exact *this* of us without *any* Mitigation or Abatement, I doubt that even the *beſt* of Men would never be able to abide the Teſt of it. But then beſides this Kind of Inconſideration, which is either purely *involuntary*, and by conſequence *innocent*, or but partly *voluntary*, and ſo *excuſable*; there is *another* Sort of it, which is abſolutely and inexcuſably *wilful*. And *This* is twofold, *viz. actual* and *habitual*. Actual is either when, notwithſtanding we have been ſufficiently forewarned by *precedent* Surprizes, we are *wilfully* neglective of *our ſelves*, and take no Care to fortify our Minds by *Conſideration* againſt them in Caſe they ſhould return again upon us; or when upon the Appear-

Appearance of a *prevailing* Temptation we either quench the *good* Motions of *our own* Conſciences, and refuſe to conſider the *Evil* and *Danger* of the Sin we are tempted to, leſt we ſhould be deterred from committing it; or purpoſely contrive to baffle *our own* Conſideration, and to render it ineffectual by oppoſing againſt it either ſome *ungrounded* Hope of Impunity, or ſome *fallacious* Promiſe of future Amendment. In all which Caſes our *Inconſideration* is apparently *wilful*, and ſo conſequently muſt the Sins be, which follow upon it; and he who pleads his own *wilful Inconſideration* as an Excuſe for his Sin, doth only *Apologize* for *one* Fault by *another*, which inſtead of extenuating *inflames* and *aggravates* it. And then as for *habitual Inconſideration* it is the Effect of our *frequent* ſtifling the Convictions of *our own* Conſciences, whereby we ſear them into a *deep* Inſenſibility of *Good* and *Evil*, ſo as that at laſt we Sin on without Remorſe, and return to our Luſts with a *perfect* Indifferency without ever conſidering what we do, or reflecting upon what we have done. Now as it is no Excuſe for our Sin if it proceeds from a *ſinful* Habit contracted by frequent Acts of *wilful Sin*, ſo neither will it excuſe our Sin that it proceeds from an *habitual Inconſideration* contracted by *often* refuſing to conſider. And

as *vicious Habits* have a *proper* Evil and Guiltineſs in them diſtinct from thoſe *vicious Acts* that produced them, ſo *habitual Inconſideration* hath in it a *peculiar* Venom of its own beyond what was in thoſe *wilful* Acts of *Inconſideration* whereby it was contracted. And accordingly in *Scripture* it is deſcribed as the moſt *deſperate* State of Sinners: it is to be *paſt feeling*, which was the Condition of the *leudeſt* and moſt *irreclaimable Gentiles*, *Eph.* 4. 19. it is to have *a ſeared conſcience*, the *Character* of Sinners under the *laſt Apoſtacy*, 1 *Tim.* 4. 2. it is to have *a reprobate mind*, which was the *Cauſe* and *Effect* of the *foulеſt Gentile* Impieties, 1 *Rom.* 28, 29. In a word it is to have a *hard*, and *unrelenting* Heart, by which Men are ſaid to *treaſure up wrath againſt the day of wrath*, Rom. 2. 5.

3. And laſtly, another Sort of *wilful Sins* are ſuch as are wilfully committed againſt *Knowledge* and *Conſideration*. I ſay again wilfully, to exclude thoſe *known* Evils, which either we do not all conſent to, or very imperfectly. For it is a *known* Evil for a Man to *rove* in his Devotions, or to think *blaſphemous* Thoughts of *God*, or to be *drowſy* and *liſtleſs* in our Addreſſes to him; and yet many times theſe are the *neceſſary Effects* even of *innocent Cauſes*, ſuch as *Melancholy*, or *Wearineſs*, or *antecedent Thoughtfulneſs*; and

and therefore tho' they are *evil* in the Matter, yet becauſe they neceſſarily proceed from ſuch Cauſes as are not *evil*, we are no more accountable for them than for the *Returns* of our Appetite, or the *Palpitation* of our Heart: and if we do not indulge our *Drowſineſs*, nor harbour and entertain our *evil* Thoughts, but throw them out of our Minds as ſoon as we obſerve them, and keep a more *careful* Watch to prevent their Return, our Will is *innocent*, and ſo long we may be ſure *God* will not condemn us for our Weakneſs. Again, it is a *known* Evil for a Man to be angry *without a Cauſe*, or to have an *unchaſt* Deſire, or to *love*, or *hate*, or *hope*, or *fear*, or *rejoyce*, or *grieve* unreaſonably; yet theſe Evils are ſuch as *no* Care can wholly prevent, and againſt which *no* Watchfulneſs is a *ſufficient* Guard. And tho' in many of theſe Inſtances there be many times *ſo much* of our Will intermingled as to render us culpable, yet this is not ſufficient to extinguiſh the Principle of our *Regeneration*, or to degrade us into a State of *Wickedneſs*. But when a Man knows that ſuch an Action is *evil*, and either *actually* conſiders that it is ſo, or neglects to conſider it through *habitual Inconſideration*, and thereupon actually conſents to it; he doth hereby *openly* defy *God*, and maliciouſly trample upon his Authority, being

deſperately reſolved to purſue his *ſinful* Deſire let *God* and his *Conſcience* ſay what they can to the contrary; which is ſuch an Height of *wilful* Malice as no *Apology* can extenuate. Hence our *Saviour* pronounces that *the ſervant that knows his Maſters will, and doth it not ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes*, Luke 12. 47. And accordingly St. *James* tells us, that he that *knows to do good, and doth it not, to him it is ſin*; that is, 'tis a very *great* and *inexcuſable* Sin, *James* 4. 17. and St. *Paul* aſſures us that *the wrath of God is revealed from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs, and unrighteouſneſs of men, who hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs*; that is, who know the Truth, and yet wilfully ſin againſt their Knowledge, *Rom.* 1. 18. and to name no more *Heb.* 10. 26. we are told, that *if we ſin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more ſacrifice for ſin*; which Words are to be underſtood according to the *general* Analogy of the *Goſpel* [*if we ſin wilfully*] i. e. if we are deliberately guilty of any known Sin [*after we have received the knowledge of the truth*] i. e. have been *chatechized* and *baptized* in the *Chriſtian* Faith [*there remains no more ſacrifice for ſin*] *i. e.* unleſs we recover our ſelves by Repentance, and Amendment of the Fact. And ſeeing that where we ſin wilfully the Vertue of the

great

great Sacrifice for Sin hath no Place without a *ſpecial* and *particular* Repentance, and conſequently there is no *other* Remedy left for us in the *Goſpel*, all that remains is what follows in the next verſe, *viz. a certain fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery indignation to devour the adverſary.* From whence it follows that upon our ſinning *knowingly* and *wilfully* in any *particular* Inſtance, we fall into a State of Wrath and Condemnation, and conſequently fall from the *happy* State of our *Regeneration*, or *being born of God.*

And now to conclude this Argument, from the whole I infer the *horrible* Evil of conſenting to any *known* Sin, after we have entered into *good* Reſolutions to the contrary; which will plainly appear upon the following Conſiderations.

1. Conſider the *ſhameful* Weakneſs and Impotency of it. For ſuch Reſolutions, if they are well formed, are grounded on the *ſtrongeſt* and moſt *momentous* Reaſons in the world; and for a Man to *Cancel* a Reſolution inforced with ſuch *powerful* Motives for a *meer* Vanity, or to gratify ſome *fooliſh* and *importunate* Luſt, the *Pleaſure* of which dyes away in the *Enjoyment*, argues him to have a *baſe* and *proſtitute* Mind, that hath no Strength of *Thought*, or ſtedfaſtneſs of *Will* in it, but is whiffled up and down like a Feather in the Air by every little *Counter-blaſt* of Wind. 2. Con-

2. Conſider the *prodigious* Hazard to which we expoſe our ſelves by it. For by every *wilful Sin* after *ſuch* a Reſolution we throw our ſelves headlong from the *beſt* into the *worſt* Eſtate in the world, from a State of *Love* into a State of *Wrath*, from being *born of God* to being a *Son of perdition*; and if we thence be ſnatched away, before we have recovered our Relapſe, (as who knows but we may,) we ſhall dye *for ever*, and by one *deſperate* Act of Folly fall from Heaven into Hell. But ſuppoſe we ſhould *ſurvive* our Sin, and be allowed a ſpace of Repentance; yet is it a *mighty* Hazard whether ever we make a *good* Uſe of it. For when by one *wilful* Sin we have made a Breach into our *good* Reſolution, in all probability *that* will open a Gap for *another* to follow, and *that* for *another*, till hereby our *evil* Habits at laſt recover their *full* Power, and then our *Will* and *Practice* will be laid open again into a common *Thoroughfare* of Iniquity. For when we conſented to the *firſt* Sin it was with a Promiſe of repenting immediately, and upon the *ſame* Promiſe in all probability upon the next Temptation we ſhall conſent to a *ſecond*, and ſo to a *third*; and by this Train the *Devil* will tole us *on* through a *long* Courſe of Sin, till at length our *Will* is *depraved* again, and our Conſcience *ſeared*, and then we

we ſhall lay aſide all Thoughts of Repentance.

3. Conſider the *great* Sorrow and Remorſe that muſt follow upon our Sin, in Caſe we ſhould repent of it. For to be *ſure* before we can heartily repent of it, our Mind muſt be ſtung with many *ſevere* Reflections upon our own *wretched* Weakneſs and Impotence, and our Falſeneſs and Perfidiouſneſs to our *own* Ingagements and Reſolutions, upon the Affront we have given to our *good* God, and the *vile* Contempt we have offer'd to his moſt *righteous* Authority, and our ungrateful grieving his *holy Spirit*, whereby, before we committed this Wickedneſs, we were *ſealed unto the day of Redemption:* all which if we have any thing of *good* Nature and Ingenuity, and much more if we have any the *leaſt* Foot-ſtep or Remains of that *divine Seed*, by which we were *born of God*, muſt neceſſarily create in us a moſt *pungent* Sorrow and Remorſe, whenever we reflect upon it; a Sorrow that will be much *more* than *equivalent* to the *higheſt* Pleaſure we can hope for from any *wilful Sin:* and for a Man to commit ſuch a Sin upon a Preſumption that he ſhall repent of it, when he cannot but foreſee, if he be in his Wits, that his Repentance will coſt him far *more ſorrow* than his ſin will yield him *Pleaſure*, is all Folly and Madneſs.

4. Con-

4. Conſider how much of *that* Ground we loſe back by every *wilful Sin* which by hitherto keeping true to our *good Reſolution* we had gotten againſt our *evil* Inclinations. Our *Religion* can never be eaſy to us till in ſome good Meaſure we have *mortified* and *extinguiſhed* our *depraved* Inclinations; for till then in the whole Courſe of our *Religious* Practice we ſhall row againſt the Stream, and be continually warring againſt and doing Violence to *our ſelves*. But if when a Man hath once entered into a *good Reſolution* he takes care to purſue it, he will find by degrees his *bad Inclinations decay* and *wear* off; and proportionably, as they decay, *Piety* and *Vertue* will grow *more* and *more* natural and eaſy to him. But when a Man hath for ſome time faithfully purſued his *good Reſolution*, and hath thereby got a great deal of Ground of his *bad Inclinations*, if then he unravels it by any one *wilful Act* of Sin, his *bad Inclinations* will thereby recover all thoſe Degrees of Strength and Vigour which they loſt in the *paſt* Courſe of his *Piety* and *Vertue*; ſo that now he muſt be forced to begin the *whole* Work of his *Religion* again, and to ſtruggle through all thoſe Difficulties, which he had before ſurmounted. Now he muſt fight over again all the Victories he had gotten, before he can regain *that* Command

and

and *Empire* of himſelf, to which he was arrived before he revolted from his *good Reſolution*; and thus for a *Moments* Satisfaction he fooliſhly creates himſelf a *long* and *tedious* Labour.

5. And laſtly conſider how by every *wilful Sin* you will *weaken* and *impair* thoſe *comfortable* Hopes you had arrived to by perſevering in your *good Reſolution*. While you perſevere in *Well-doing*, your Minds will be all a long entertained and refreſhed with the *growing* Hopes of your Reconciliation with *God* at preſent, and of a *glorious* Immortality to ſucceed; and thoſe *bleſſed* Hopes will every Day improve upon your Hands, till at length they are *ripened* into a *full* Aſſurance; the Comfort of which will mightily *ſpirit* and *inliven* all your *Religious* Endeavours, and carry you on with *indefatigable* Vigour through all the *weary* Stages of your Duty. But now by committing of any *wilful Sin*, thereby you throw *your ſelves* out of the Arms of God's Favour, and give *up* all your Pretenſions to *eternal* Happineſs; and tho' by your *ſerious* Repentance you ſhould afterwards recover to the *bleſſed* Condition from whence you are fallen, yet in all Probability it will be a great while before you will be able to recover thoſe bleſſed Hopes from whence you are fallen. For the Senſe of your *paſt* Lapſe,

Lapſe, if you have any *Modeſty* in you, will make you very *anxious* and *doubtful* of your ſelves and render you extremely *fearful* and *ſuſpicious*, leſt you ſhould fall again; and ſo only *ſin* and *repent*, and *repent* and *ſin* on, 'till at length you have ſinned your ſelves beyond all *Repentance*; and theſe very *juſt* Fears and Jealouſies will very much hinder the *Growth* of your Hopes, and cauſe them to ſpring by *ſlow* and *inſenſible* Degrees.

JOHN

JOHN XIV. 27.

Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you: not as the World giveth, give I unto you: Let not your Heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

THeſe Words are a Part of our *Saviour*'s farewell Diſcourſe to his Diſciples, in which after he had given them ſome *neceſſary* Inſtructions for the Information of their Faith, and Conduct of their Manners, in which after he had comforted them with the Aſſurance that e'er long he would return again to them by his *holy Spirit*, and aſſiſt them in their Work, and ſupport them under their Troubles, he takes a *ſolemn* leave of them, *Peace I leave with you* Which among the *Hebrews* was the uſual Form of Salutation when they met or parted, *Shalom Lacha, Peace be unto you*; where, by *Peace*, they meant all manner of *Bleſſings*; ſo that it was equivalent to all thoſe *Three* Salutations among the *Greeks* χαίρειν, εὐγιαίνειν, εὐπράττειν, in which they wiſhed to each *other Satisfaction of Mind, Health of Body*, and *Succeſs of Affairs.* So that in this Salutation *Peace I leave with you*, our *Soviour* wiſhes all

Good

Good to his Diſciples, of which, *Peace* ſtrictly taken, is one of the *principal* Inſtances. Nor, ſaith he, do I only wiſh *Peace* to you in general, but I give you *my Peace*, or the Wiſh and Salutation of *my Peace*; which is a much *better* Peace than that which Men have hitherto enjoyed, an *inward* Peace of Mind and Soul founded upon much *ſurer* Grounds and *better* Principles than thoſe which *natural Reaſon* and *Philoſophy* pretend to. And this *new* kind of Peace which is properly mine, becauſe founded upon my Principles, *I give unto you: not as the World giveth, give I unto you.* The Men of the World give the Salutation of *Peace* to each *other* many times out of *meer* Complement, without any *real* Wiſh, or *hearty* meaning, and when they mean what they ſay, it is commonly nothing but an *empty impotent* Wiſh that conduces nothing, or at leaſt, not enough to the Peace and Satisfaction of thoſe whom they ſalute. But as for *my* part, as I give you the Salutation of Peace, ſo I heartily mean and wiſh that you may enjoy it; nor do I only wiſh you Peace, but I have alſo taken Care to furniſh you with ſuch *abundant* Means, and *effectual* Principles of Peace, as that if you are not extreamly wanting to your ſelves, you cannot long be without it. The Words thus Explained, the Senſe of them may be reſolved into this Propoſition.

That

That our *bleſſed* Lord as he heartily wiſhes *Peace* and *Quiet* of Mind to all his Diſciples and Followers, ſo he hath taken Care to furniſh them with the moſt *ſufficient* and *effectual* Means to obtain it: the Truth of which, evidently appears upon a full Conſideration of theſe Two Particulars: *Firſt*, that he hath taken the moſt *effectual* Care to remove from us all the Cauſes of *Trouble* and *Diſquiet* of Mind. *Secondly*, that he hath taken Care to ſupply us with the moſt *effectual* Principles of *Peace* and *Satisfaction* of Mind.

1. I begin with the *firſt* of theſe, *viz.* that our *bleſſed* Lord hath taken the moſt *effectual* Care to remove from us all the Cauſes of *Trouble* and *Diſquiet* of Mind; and they are principally theſe Five.

1. The Senſe of *Guilt*.
2. *Falſe* and *extravagant* Eſtimations of the *good* Things of the World.
3. Our taking up *wrong* Meaſures and Opinions of the *Evils* of the World.
4. An *effeminate* Softneſs and Delicacy of Temper.
5. Miſplacing of our *Happineſs* in Things that are out of *our own* Power.

1. One Cauſe of *diſquiet* of Mind, is the Senſe of Guilt. For God hath imprinted ſuch an *awful* Apprehenſion of his own *inviſible* Power and Majeſty on our Minds, that

whenever we reflect upon the manifold Provocations we have given him, to arm his *Omnipotent* Vengeance againſt us, it muſt naturally ſuggeſt very *anxious* and *direful* Thoughts to our Minds, and fill us with *black* and *horrible* Apprehenſions of the *fatal* Conſequents of his Wrath and Diſpleaſure againſt us. So that till ſuch time as Men have ſtupified their *natural* Senſe of *God* by a *long* Cuſtom, and *inveterate* Habit of ſinning, it will be as impoſſible for them to be at Peace under the Apprehenſion of his Diſpleaſure, as it is to ſleep with an *Alarm* in their Ears. But till ſuch time as our *Saviour* had procured for us the *new Covenant*, by which *God* hath ſolemnly obliged himſelf to pardon us upon our Repentance; *ſinful* Men, tho' *true* Penitents, could never have arrived at that Degree of Security, that *God* was reconciled to them, as is neceſſary to ſet their Minds at Reſt, and free them from all Anxiety. For tho' to repent is the *beſt* thing a Sinner can do, yet this doth not at all alter the Nature of the *Sin* he repents of, ſo as to render it *leſs* evil, or *leſs* deſerving of Puniſhment; and ſo long as the Deſert of Puniſhment remains, *God* hath a *natural* Right to execute it, and ſo long we can never be certain whether he will exact it or no. Some *wavering* Hopes a *poor* Penitent might have arrived to, upon the Conſide-

ſideration of the *infinite* Benignity of the *divine* Nature, but the utmoſt Comfort he could have given himſelf, was that of the *penitent* King of *Nineveh*; *who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we periſh not?* Jonah 3. 9. But alas! when a Man's Mind is *hagg'd* and *ridden* with his Guilts, *who can tell?* is ſuch a *poor* Relief as muſt neceſſarily leave it extreamly anxious and diſponding. But now upon our Saviour's procuring for us the *new Covenant*, you and I, and every one of us can tell, and that with as much certainty as that *God* is true, that if we do repent, and turn from our *evil* Ways, *God* will turn, and repent of his Anger, and Diſpleaſure againſt us. So that now all we have to do is to reflect upon our ſelves, and examin whether we are *true* Penitents or no, whether we have ſubmitted our Will to Gods, with a *full* Purpoſe and Reſolution to fly whatever he forbids, and follow whatever he commands us; and if we have, we may upon the Terms of the *New Covenant*, from thence as certainly conclude that he is reconciled to us, and that his *high* Diſpleaſure againſt us, is all converted into the *deareſt* Kindneſs and Complacency, as we can that he is *God*, or which is all one, that he is *true* and *faithful*; which doubtleſs is one of the moſt *ſolid* Foundations of Peace and Satisfaction in the

World. For what can diſturb me while I feel my ſelf lodged in *his* Arms and Embraces whoſe Wiſdom, I am ſure, no *Craft* can out-wit, and with whoſe *Power* no *Force* is able to contend. Here I dwell as in an *impregnable* Fortreſs, where nothing can come at me, but what is for my *good*; how then can any thing prove *adverſe* to me, while he is my *Friend*, in whoſe Hands and Diſpoſal every thing that concerns me is placed?

2. Another Cauſe of Diſquiet of Mind, is our *falſe* and *extravagant* Eſtimations of the *good* Things of this World. The main Spring of thoſe Troubles which perplex our Minds, is the *Goods* and *Evils* that are without us, and without our Power and Diſpoſal, in which we commonly fancy far more *Good* and *Evil* than really there is. We look upon the *good* Things of this World as *unskilful* Spectators do on *Landskips*, in which while they ſtand at a Diſtance, they fancy they behold *here* a *ſmiling* Meadow, *there* a *delightful* Grove, and *there* a *lofty* Mountain; but upon a *nearer* Approach, and more *conſiderate* View, find all this *goodly* Proſpect to be nothing but a *courſe* Canvas artificially painted with Colours and Shadows. Thus while we behold the *Riches*, the *Pleaſures*, and the *Honours* of this World at a Diſtance, to our *wild* Imaginations there appear *vaſt* Mountains of Happineſs in them, *fruitful* Fields

Fields of Pleaſure, *delightful Groves* of Content and Satisfaction, which while we are in the purſuit of them, fills our Minds full of Cares, and *anxious* and *ſolicitous* Thoughts about them; but then as we approach nearer to them, and come to ſurvey them more cloſely, the Mountains preſently dwindle into *Mole-hills*, the Fields and the Groves into *empty* Shadows; and after all our Labour and Care to poſſeſs our ſelves of them, our *Enjoyment* of them amounts not to the Tithe of our *Hope*, and ſo we are ſtill reſtleſs and unſatisfied, both while we are in the Queſt, and while we are in the Poſſeſſion of them. While we are in the Purſuit of them, we are *wild* and *imaginative*; we ſwell with *fantaſtick* Joys, and juggle our ſelves into Expectations as great and eager as *our own* Deſires; but as ſoon as we are poſſeſſed of them, we preſently find their Vanity and Emptineſs, and perceiving how *little* they are able to perform of thoſe *vaſt* Things they promiſed us, our *abuſed* Fancy that had raiſed it ſelf with ſuch *high* and *ſwelling* Expectations, falls flat underneath the Diſappointments of Fruition, and ſo while we are following, we are reſtleſs, and when we have overtaken them, we are diſſatisfied; all which ariſes from thoſe *extravagant* Eſtimations we make of them. Whereas did we but value them as they are,

and according to the *true* Rules of *Reaſon* and *Religion*, we ſhould purſue them with *far* more Indifference, and enjoy them with *far* more Content. While we are in purſuit of them, we ſhould look upon them as Things without which we may be *happy*, and conſequently as Things that have not worth enough in them to deſerve of us any *mighty* Care or Solicitude, and ſo we ſhould follow them with a *calm* and *ſedate* Mind; and entering into the Poſſeſſion of them with a *moderate* Expectation, we ſhould find every Thing in them, that we hoped for; for all the *Good* that they promiſed, they would be ſure to perform, and ſo we ſhould have no *diſappointed* Hope to vex & diſturb us, but our Expectation would be intirely ſatisfied in our Enjoyment. Thus would we take care to fix in our Minds a *true* Eſtimation of the *good* Things of this World, and to prize them at thoſe Rates that our *Religion* ſets upon them, they would never be able to give us half the Diſturbance they now do; for then we ſhould look upon them as Things that are *extrinſick* to our Happineſs, as Things that we may want without Damage, or enjoy without Advantage to our main Intereſt; and eſteeming them as ſuch, we ſhould purſue them with much *leſs* Concern, and enjoy them with much *more* Satisfaction; We ſhould not be vexed with ſuch an *impatient* Deſire

of

of gaining them, nor alarmed with ſo many *tormenting* Fears of loſing them; but with S. *Paul* we ſhould know both *how to want* them, and *how to abound* in them, and to undergo *both* Fortunes with a *calm*, and *chearful* Mind.

3. Another Cauſe of Diſquiet of Mind, is our taking up *wrong* Meaſures and Opinions of the *Evils* of the World. As for thoſe *Evils* which are only the Objects of our *Faith* and *Reaſon*, and ſuch are the *eternal Evils* of the *other* World, we are always apt to leſſen and diminiſh them, and flatter our ſelves with *ſoft* and *eaſie* Apprehenſions of them; but as for thoſe that ſtrike upon our Senſe, we are ever prone to ſwell and magnifie them; which is the reaſon that the *former* diſquiet us *too* little, and the *latter too* much, tho' our Diſquiet for the *one* is neceſſary to prevent them, whereas our Trouble for the *other* doth only ſerve to render them more grievous and oppreſſive. For the *greateſt* Power theſe *outward ſenſible* Evils have to hurt and damnifie us, they derive from *our own* Imagination, which oftentimes diſguiſes them in *grim* and *frightful* Vizards, and makes them appear to us a Thouſand Times more *terrible* than they are, inſomuch that the Proſpect and Apprehenſion is generally more *grievous* to us, than the Senſe and Experience of them, and what we imagin in them, is far more than what

we feel. And thus we turn each *Whip* into a *Scorpion*, and ſwell our *Mole-hill* into a *Mountain* of Miſery; ſo that the greateſt part of what we ſuffer, is generally of our own creating, becauſe we ſuffer not only the *real* Evils which are in the Things themſelves, but which are commonly more, the *fantaſtick* too which *our own* Imagination forms and affixes to them. So that would we but take Care to ſtrip *Realities* from *Fantaſtry*, it would be impoſſible for thoſe *Evils* which we feel or fear to give us half the Diſturbance that they do; and the only way for us to do this, is to take our Meaſures of theſe *outward* Evils from *Religion*, which will ſoon ſatisfie us that they are nothing near ſo *formidable* in themſelves, as we imagin them. For as for Inſtance, what *mighty* Matter is there in the loſs of theſe *outward* Goods which are all ſo *extrinſick* to our Happineſs, which cannot help us in our *greateſt* Needs, nor make us eaſie in their *fulleſt* Enjoyment, and which *Thouſands* enjoy not, and yet are a Thouſand Times more *happy* than thoſe who poſſeſs them in the *greateſt* Abundance? Again, what *great Evil* is it for a Man to be contemned, and reproached, and vilified? for as for theſe Things they are *Good* or *Evil* as we pleaſe to fancy them, and there is ſcarce any *other* Venom in them, than what *our own* Imagination doth

doth infuſe. If we think them *great Evils*, they will be ſure to vex and diſcompoſe us, which is the *greateſt* Injury they can do us; but if we ſcorn and deſpiſe them, they are *impotent* Things, which like *Wild-fire*, do only crack and vaniſh into Air, but leave no *formidable* Effects behind them. To name no more, what *mighty* Hurt is there in being *perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake*? Suppoſe I were baniſhed from my Friends and *native* Country, do I not ſee Men every Day undertake a *voluntary* Exile, and baniſh themſelves into the *remoteſt* Parts of the World, only to get an Eſtate, or to learn Experience, or ſatisfie a Curioſity? for all the difference between *one* and *t'other*, is only this, that the *one* is forced, and the *other* voluntary, and why the *one* ſhould be worſe than the *other*, there can be no *other* Reaſon aſſigned, but only this, that we imagin it ſo. Could we but cure our *erroneous* Fancy, ſuch Baniſhment would be only a more *advantageous* Travel, ſince doubtleſs, he who travels to ſave his Conſcience and Innocence, and ſecure his Hopes of *everlaſting* Bliſs, makes the beſt Voyage in the World. Suppoſe I ſhould ſuffer a *cloſe* Impriſonment, and be ſecluded from *human* Converſation; is it ſuch a *deplorable* Thing for a Man to be kept within Doors, to be ſnatch'd out of the Crowd and *Hurry* of the World, and

be

be forced to retire within himſelf, and converſe with *God*, and *Heaven*, and his own Thoughts? Are not *theſe* Company enough to entertain our Solitudes, and to ſupply the Want of the Noiſe of the World, in which there is commonly ſo much of Diſcord and Impertinence? But then ſuppoſe the worſt that you *can* ſuppoſe; that you ſhould ſuffer a *tormenting* Death, and be chaſed out of the World with the *ſevereſt* Inſtruments of *human* Cruelty. It is certain that e'er long you muſt have died whether you had ſuffer'd *Martyrdom* or no; only now you die a little ſooner, and ſo anticipate your *eternal* Happineſs. And if you had died a *natural* Death, perhaps the Torment might have been much greater; you might have languiſhed much longer under the *Gout*, or *Stone*, or *Strangury*, than under the Hands of the Executioner, and endured the *ſame* Degree of Torment, without the Comfort of dying in a *brave* Cauſe, and being aſſured of an *immortal* Recompence. Thus *Religion* ſets the *Evils* of this World in a true Light, and repreſents them to us in their own *natural* Forms and Colours, without any of that *terrible* Pomp in which our Imagination is ſo apt to dreſs and diſguiſe them; it aſſures us that they are all deſign'd for our *good*, and are convertible into it, and if we take Care to make a *wiſe* and *pious* Uſe of

of them, we ſhall be the better for them for ever; it certifies us that they can deprive us of no *Good*, but what e'er long will be inſignificant to us; and that they can do us no *Hurt*, but what e'er long we ſhall be inſenſible of *for ever*; and by thus expoſing theſe *Evils* naked to us, it ſhews us their Nakedneſs, and Impotence, and thereby deprives them of the Power they borrow of our *Fancies* to diſturb our Tranquility and Peace.

4. Another Cauſe of Diſquiet of Mind, is an *effeminate* Softneſs, and Delicacy of Temper, ariſing from our Neglect of exerciſing thoſe *Vertues* which naturally tend to confirm and fortifie the Mind againſt *troubleſome* and *diſquieting* Accidents; ſuch as *Faith*, *Patience*, and *Self-denial*, *Submiſſion* and *Reſignation* to *God*, which when like ſo many *Guardian Angels* they pitch their Tents about the Soul, are an *invincible* Defence to her againſt the Strokes and Impreſſions of Misfortune, and without which, ſhe is left altogether *naked* and *unguarded* amidſt all the *diſquieting* Accidents that ſurround her. For in the Abſence of theſe *heavenly* Graces, a Man hath nothing wherewithal to reſiſt any *Evil* that befalls him, but only the *inſenſible* Stupidity, and *brutal* Sturdineſs of his Temper, which can never hold out long under any *preſſing* Calamity; and

and when once theſe are broke by the *repeated* Strokes and Impreſſions of *unfortunate* Accidents, the Man preſently diſſolves into Softneſs and Effeminacy; for now the *natural* Brawneſs of Temper being worn away like a Stone with the continual Droppings of Rain, his Mind will become ſo *tender*, and *ſore*, and *uneaſie*, that every *little* Touch of Misfortune will pain and diſturb him; in which Caſe he can derive no Relief from his Reaſon, having all along diſuſed himſelf to adviſe and conſult with it; and ſo every *Alarm* of Danger from *without*, preſently raiſes a Tumult *within*, and puts his whole *Soul* into an uproar, in which his Mind is left naked of all Relief, and utterly abandoned of thoſe *wiſe* and *brave* Thoughts which ſhould guard and defend it. But now had he taken Care but to educate his Mind in the School of *Chriſtianity*, *that* by inſtructing him in all thoſe *manly* Vertues of *Patience* and *Temperance*, *Conſtancy* and *Reſignation* to the Will of *God*, would have inſpir'd him by Degrees with ſuch an *invincible* Stayedneſs and Firmneſs of Spirit, as would have rendred his Peace and Tranquility impregnable againſt all the Aſſaults of Misfortune. And when all is done, theſe *Vertues* are the *beſt* Protection we have againſt the Power of thoſe *calamitous* Accidents that ſurround us. For when by *Temperance* a Man

Man hath weaned himſelf from the Pleaſures of the Body, when by *Patience* he hath hardned himſelf againſt the Pains and Diſpleaſures of it, when by *Conſtancy* to himſelf, he hath acquired a *continual* Preſence of Mind, and ready Uſe of his Reaſon and Conſideration, when by *frequent* Acts of *Reſignation* to *God* he hath reduced himſelf to an Habit of embracing every Accident as a Token of Love, and bidding every Thing welcome that befals him; when, I ſay, theſe *happy* Effects are produced in him, he is as ſafe and ſecure from the diſquieting Power of theſe *evil* Accidents below, as if he lived in the *uppermoſt Regions* of the Air, where he enjoys a *perpetual* Calm and Serenity, where he tramples upon Clouds, and is above all Storms, and with a *chearful* and *compoſed* Mind can ſit ſecurely, ſmiling at the *rolling* Thunder *below*, whilſt it grumbles and burſts underneath his Feet. Thus will the *conſtant* Practice of theſe *excellent* Graces, ſo *ſteel* and *harden* our *tender* Minds, that thoſe *Evils* will be able to make no Impreſſion on us, which now do wound us to the Heart. For as the Light of the Sun, and Freſhneſs of the Air which are apt to offend the *Sickly* and *Tender*, are not only tolerable but delightful to Men of *hail* and *vigorous* Conſtitutions; ſo many of the *little* Hardſhips which trouble and incommode the

the *Tender* and *Delicate*, are ſo far from diſturbing *patient* and *temperate* Minds, that they rather refreſh and divert them

5. And laſtly, Another Cauſe of Diſquiet of Mind, is our miſplacing of our *Happineſs* in Things that are out of *our own* Power. For Happineſs is the *great* Load-ſtone that attracts and governs all our Motions, the Mark of all our Aims and Intentions, and the End of all our *deliberate* Actions. Whilſt therefore we place our *Happineſs* in Things that are out of our Power, we muſt be governed by Things that are out of our Power, and while we are ſo, we can never be quiet. For the Things that are out of our Power, being all of them *caſual* and *contingent*, ſuch as *Honour*, and *Greatneſs*, and *Carnal-Pleaſures*; we can never be ſecure of the Comfort and Happineſs we place in them, and conſequently, our *Happineſs* and *Miſery* muſt be as *caſual* and *contingent* as the *Goods* and *Evils* are from whence they do ariſe. And whilſt we are governed by ſuch *caſual* Things as theſe, we can never be *our own* Men, but muſt live in Subjection to a *forraign* Power, and be what the Things that govern us will have us; and ſo long as the Paſſions and Appetites that over-rule us, are over-ruled by the Chances and Contingencies without us, we muſt be as *various*, as *fickle*, and as *multiform* as they. Whilſt there-

therefore we place our Happineſs in theſe *uncertain* Enjoyments, it is impoſſible our Mind ſhould ever be at reſt, but like a Ship in a *tempeſtuous* Sea, muſt be perpetually toſſed and driven *to* and *fro* by the *furious* Guſts of our own Paſſions, which can never be *calm* and *ſedate*, till we fix upon a Happineſs that is *certain* and *Stable*: For as our *Deſires* can never be ſatisfied till we are compleatly happy, ſo our *Fears* can never be compoſed till ſuch time as we are ſecure of our Happineſs. But ſo *empty* and *fickle* is all worldly *Good*, that we can never be either *happy* in it, or ſecure of it; for when we have what we did firſt deſire, *that* only inflames our Thirſt, and makes us gaſp for more; and then the Tenure of all is ſo *inſecure*, that the Acceſſion of more doth only increaſe our Fear of loſing what we have. So that our Mind muſt be perpetually ground between theſe *Two reſtleſs* Mill-ſtones, the *Deſire* of getting more, and the *Fear* of loſing what we enjoy; and therefore ſeeing it is impoſſible for us to alter the Nature of theſe *outward* Goods, or to render them either more ſecure, or more ſatisfying, the only way for us to be truly *happy*, is to alter the Temper of our *own* Minds, to wean them from this World, and determin them to an Happineſs that is more Solid and Subſtantial, and within *our own* Diſpo-

Diſpoſal; and ſuch a Happineſs is that which *Chriſtianity* propoſes to us, an Happineſs that depends upon our own *free* Acts, and grows out of the *Graces* and *Vertues* of our own Mind. For ſo that *everlaſting* Heaven which the *Goſpel* propoſes to us is inſeparably annexed to the *right* and *good* Uſe of our *natural* Liberty, and conſequently is as much within our Power, as *our own* Reſolutions, and *voluntary* Motions. Whilſt therefore we are under the Government of this *Chriſtian* Happineſs, we are Maſters of *our own* Fortunes, and do live independently on Chance and the Wills of Men, and it is within *our own* Power to be happy without asking leave of any but *God* and our ſelves. Now we are no longer *Tenants at Will* to the *little* Caſualties and Accidents of the World, no longer liable to be turned out of our Happineſs by *Storms*, or *Fires*, or *Invaſions*, by the *Contingencies* of Providence, or the *Knaveries* and *Cruelties* of Men; no more expoſed like *miſerable* Vagrants to beg our Happineſs from Door to Door, to creep, and cringe, and fawn to the Humours of an *inconſtant* World, to court its Smiles, or tremble at its Frowns. For if *Heaven* be the Happineſs we depend on, there is nothing can deprive us of it, but our own *free* Acts, and it is as much in our Power not to be *miſerable*, as not to be

wicked

wicked; and our *Happineſs* being all imbarked in the ſame bottom with our *Piety* and *Vertue*, they muſt both of them run the ſame Fate, and either ſwim or ſink together. If therefore we would be at *Peace* within our ſelves, we muſt put our ſelves under the Government of the Happineſs of *Chriſtians*, which is the only one that we can be ſure of, there being no other within *our own* Power and Diſpoſal; for till this is done, we are like Men in a Crowd, encompaſſed about with ſo many *croſs rancountring* Accidents as will never let us be at reſt, but be perpetually ſhoving, and joſtling us *to* and *fro*, and ſtill as we get free from *one*, another will be preſſing upon us, and that which thruſts on *this*, will ſtill be thruſt on by *another* without any Pauſe or Intermiſſion; and ſo our *miſerable* Minds will be always hurried about, and never want Cauſes of Diſquiet. But when once we have fix'd upon *that* Happineſs above, we ſhall be ſo much above theſe *little* Accidents *below*, and their Force will be ſo broken, before they can reach us, that we ſhall ſcarce be ſenſible of their *faint* Impreſſions, and ſo we ſhall paſs on as quietly and undiſturbedly through them, as we do now through thoſe Crowds of *Motes* that are always dancing in the Air about us.

And ſo I have diſpatched the firſt Thing I propoſed, which was to ſhew that our *bleſſed*

Lord in order to his giving us *his Peace*, hath removed from us all Cauſes of Diſquiet.

2. I now proceed to the Second, which is to ſhew, that he hath alſo taken Care to ſupply us with the moſt *effectual* Principles of *Peace*, and *Satisfaction* of Mind; and they are theſe following:

1. That by the Sacrifice of *himſelf*, he hath purged away our Guilts, and thereby given us the moſt *certain* Ground of Peace of Conſcience.
2. That as he ſacrificed himſelf for us, while he was upon *Earth*, ſo now he is in *Heaven*, he hath the Ordering and Diſpoſal of every Thing that concerns or befals us.
3. That he hath procured for us a Futurity, ſufficiently happy to make us *infinite* amends for the *worſt* Evils that can befal us here.
4. That he hath eſtabliſhed this *happy* Futurity upon ſuch Terms and Conditions, as are within the reach of *our own* Power.
5. That he hath taken Care in his Abſence to provide for us *ſuch* Supports as are *proportionable* to every Burthen he will lay upon us.

1. One Principle of *Peace* and *Satisfaction* of Mind wherewith our *Saviour* hath ſupplied us is this, that by the Sacrifice of himſelf,

ſelf, he hath fully purged away our Guilts, and thereby given us the moſt *certain* Ground of Peace of Conſcience: For he declared that he died in our Perſons and ſtead, and that all thoſe *miſerable* Things he endured upon the Croſs, were in lieu of that Puniſhment that was due to *God* for our ſins; that the Blood he ſpilt *there*, was deſigned by him for the Price of our Redemption, and that the Life he laid down *there*, was in exchange for the *forfeited* Lives of our Souls. And to manifeſt God's Acceptance of it, as an *Equivalent* for our Puniſhment, he roſe from the dead, and was actually diſcharged from the Priſon of the Grave; by which he gave us an Acquittance under God's own Hand, purporting, that he had graciouſly accepted his Son's Death in lieu of our Puniſhment, and that if now we would heartily repent and amend all our *paſt* Guilts and Obligations to Puniſhment ſhould, in Conſideration thereof, be for ever diſſolved. *Who* then *can lay any thing to the Charge of God's Elect*, ſeeing it is *Chriſt* that hath died, and thereby tendred a *full* Ranſom for us to *God*; *yea, rather, that is riſen again*, and thereby certified us, that the Father of Mercies hath graciouſly accepted and allowed of it? So that if now we repent, we are as certain of our Pardon, as we are of the Death and Re-

ſurrection of our *Saviour*; which are ſuch Facts, of which we have as *plain* Demonſtration as the Nature of Things will bear. And having ſo *certain* a Ground of Peace of Conſcience before us, what can be more *conducive* to the Eaſe and Satisfaction of our Minds? For a *quiet* Conſcience is a Paradiſe within a Wilderneſs, whereinto a Man may retire when he can find nothing elſe to live upon, and live chearfully and merrily in deſpite of all Misfortunes, which, like Showers of Hail falling upon the Tiles of a *Muſick-Houſe*, are not able with all their Clattering and Noiſe, to diſturb the *grateful* Harmony within. As therefore when all is *ſmooth* and *proſperous without*, a Man may ſhelter himſelf there from the Perſecutions of his Conſcience, ſo when all is *calm* and *ſerene within*, he may ſhelter himſelf there from the Perſecutions of the World; but when *both* are beſtormed, he hath no Refuge to fly to. And therefore that we may never be left utterly forſaken and abandoned, our *bleſſed Saviour* by waſhing away our Guilt in *his own* Blood, hath opened to us a *ſafe* Retreat within our own Breaſts, *viz.* that of a *quiet* and *ſerene* Conſcience, whereinto we may eaſily retire, and houſe our ſelves when we are perſecuted with Storms and Tempeſts from without.

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2. Another Principle of Peace and Satisfaction of Mind wherewith our *Saviour* hath furniſhed us, is this, that as he ſacrificed himſelf for us when he was upon *Earth*, ſo now he is in *Heaven*, he hath the Ordering and Diſpoſal of every Thing that concerns or befalls us. For now he is in *Heaven*, he intercedes for us in Vertue of that Sacrifice which he offered on Earth; and in the Vertue of *this* his *meritorious* Interceſſion, all Power is given him in *Heaven* and *Earth*. And indeed herein conſiſts the *Royalty* of his *Prieſthood*, *viz.* that by interceding for us as a *Prieſt*, and continuing ſo to do, he firſt obtained, and ſtill continues veſted with a *kingly* Power and Authority to beſtow upon us all thoſe *heavenly* Bleſſings he intercedes for. And hence all the Graces and Favours of *God* are in *Scripture* ſaid to be derived to us *in*, or *by*, or *through Jeſus Chriſt*; implying, that as it is from *God* the *Father* originally, that all our Mercies flow, ſo it is through *God* the *Son* immediately, that they are handed and derived to us; and that interceding for us as he doth, and always hath done, in Vertue of the *powerful* Oratory of his Sacrifice, he was firſt conſtituted, and is ſtill continued the *royal* Diſtributer of all his Father's Graces and Favours to Man-kind. So that now we are aſſured, there is nothing can happen to us

good or bad, but by his *merciful* Diſpoſal; and can we think any thing *bad* that comes from his hand, who hath evidenced himſelf ſo much our Friend as to die for us? He who loved us to ſuch a *ſtupendous* Degree, as to come down from *Heaven*, and aſſume our Natures, and therewith, all our *innocent* Infirmities and Miſeries, and at laſt to ſuffer for us the moſt *grievous* and *infamous* Death; can he be *unkind* to us now he is our *King*, and hath the ordering and diſpoſal of all our Affairs? Whenever therefore any *calamitous* Accident befals us, and we begin to grieve or repine at it; let us remember that it is through his Permiſſion or Appointment, who was ſo much our Friend while he was upon Earth, that he tendred our Welfare far beyond his own Life; and if this doth not ſet our Hearts at reſt, and reconcile us to the *worſt* of Things that can happen to us, we are beyond the Reach and Influence of Reaſon and Diſcourſe. For how can we ſuſpect any thing to be *hurtful* to us, that is ſent us down from our *merciful* Redeemer in *Heaven*, who when he was upon *Earth* never thought any thing, no not his own Life and Blood *too* much, or *too* dear for us. How grievous ſoever therefore any *preſent* Accident may appear to us, the Hand it came from, ſpeaks and declares it to be a Token of Love, ſince to be ſure nothing but Love

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can proceed from *that* Hand whoſe Heart alway loved us far above its own Eaſe, and Joy, and Life.

3. Another Principle of Peace and Satisfaction of Mind wherewith our *Saviour* hath ſupplyed us is this, that he hath procured for us a *Futurity* ſufficient to make us *infinite* Amends for the *worſt* of *Evils* that can befal us here; for he hath not only purchaſed for us *Life* and *Immortality* at the Price of his Blood, but hath alſo clearly diſcovered and brought it to light by his *Goſpel*, the *joyous* Proſpect of which is abundantly ſufficient to ſupport our Spirits under the moſt *direful* Accidents. For now when any *melancholy* Apprehenſions begin to invade my Mind, this *bleſſed* Theme furniſhes me with ſuch a *mighty* Force of *joyous* Conſiderations as are abundantly ſufficient to diſpel and ſcatter them, and cauſe them to fly away like the Morning Miſts before the *riſing* Sun. Hold out, O my *Faith* and *Patience*, it is but a very *little* while that I have to ſuffer: This *woful* Dream that now lies hovering over my Imagination will vaniſh as ſoon as I awake in *Eternity*, and be as if it had never been at all. There all theſe *ſad* Remembrances ſhall in one Moment be for ever loſt, and ſwallowed up in one *continued everlaſting* Joy; there I ſhall unload my ſelf at once

of all my *preſent* Sighs and Griefs, and in their room take up *eternal* Songs of Praiſe and Hallelujahs: there I ſhall be placed far above all theſe Clouds and Storms in a *calm* and *quiet* Region, where there is nothing but *Light* and *Harmony*, nothing but *Peace*, and *Joy*, and *Love*; from thence I ſhall e'er long look down upon this *dark unquiet Atmoſphere*, and remember with Joy all the *foul tempeſtuous* Weather I here endured, and have now ſurmounted, and the *glad* Remembrance of what is paſt will then ſerve only as a Foil or Shadow to ſet *off* that *bleſſed* State of Things, and render it more charming and illuſtrious. Why then art thou caſt down, O my Soul, under the Senſe of theſe *ſhort-liv'd tranſitory* Evils of which within theſe very *few* Moments thou ſhalt be ſure to take leave for ever? Tho' this Night be *dark* it is but *ſhort*, and then will follow an *everlaſting* Day. Tho' thy Voyage be *foul*, it is not *long*; 'tis only a *ſhort days* Sail to a *bleſſed* Eternity, from whoſe *happy* Shores thou wilt a little while hence be looking back upon this *boiſterous* Sea, and bleſſing thoſe *angry* Storms and Waves that drove and haſtned thee to that *happy* Port; where every Moments Injoyment will be ſufficient to recompenſe thee a *thouſand-fold* for all the Hardſhips under which thou art now ſuffering and complaining.

ing. Such Thoughts as theſe that *bleſſed* Futurity our *Saviour* hath purchaſed for us do naturally ſuggeſt to our Minds, which mingling with the *utmoſt* Griefs and Anxieties that any *Evil* from *without* can raiſe *within* us are abundantly ſufficient to compoſe and calm them, and to create a *happy* Serenity in our own Breaſts, while all without us is *ſtormy* and *tempeſtuous*. For what *outward* Evil is there weighty enough to ſink a Mind, that hath the hope of an *everlaſting Heaven* to ſupport it?

4. Another Principle of Peace and Satisfaction of Mind wherewith our *Saviour* hath ſupplyed us is this, that he hath eſtabliſhed this *happy* Futurity upon ſuch Terms and Conditions as are within the Reach of *our own* Power; that is, upon *Faith in Chriſt*, and *Repentance from dead Works*; which tho' in this *degenerate* State of our Nature it be not immediately in our Power to perform, yet mediately it is by thoſe Helps and Aſſiſtances which *God* hath promiſed to us, and inſeparably annexed to our making a *good* Uſe of our own *natural* Power. For ſince *God* by his own *free* Promiſe hath entailed the Aſſiſtances of his *Grace* upon our *honeſt* Endeavour, his *Grace* is as much at our devotion as our own Faculties, and it is as much in our Power to perform what we cannot without his *Grace*, as it is to perform what

what we can; and therefore ſeeing by his Aſſiſtance we can perform the Conditions of *eternal* Life, it is in our Power to perform them, becauſe it is no leſs within our Power to oblige him to aſſiſt us than it is to oblige our ſelves to exert *our own* Power and Endeavours; the Conditions of our Happineſs being through the Grace of *God* within our own Power, our Happineſs is ſo too; which if duly conſidered is a *mighty* Support under all Afflictions from without. For why ſhould we grieve that it is in the Power of Men and a thouſand *adverſe* Accidents to rob us of our *Eaſe* and our *Wealth*, our *Liberty* and *Reputation*? *God* be praiſed our *main* Happineſs conſiſts not in theſe Things, but in *Heaven*; there lies the Treaſure of our Hearts, and the Hope of our Lives, of which there is none but our ſelves can diſappoint us. If we will be happy in the *eternal* Poſſeſſion of that *inexhauſtable* Mine of *Bliſs*, we may, and all the Hardſhips and Inconveniencies we may endure on the Way to it are neither able to obſtruct our Paſſage, nor hinder our *ſafe* Arrival; unleſs by a *baſe* Surrender to them we betray our ſelves. So that now we may give a *bold* Defyance to all the *combining* Malice of Men and Devils, and tell them that we will be *happy*, eternally *happy* in deſpite of the worſt they can do to us, ſeeing

ing the matter wholly depends upon *our own* Courage and Reſolution backt and aſſiſted by the *never-failing* Grace of God. There is nothing that Men or Misfortune can deprive me of but I can live without, and maintain my ſelf in a *happy* and *glorious* Poſt for ever. Why then ſhould I grieve to ſee my Drugs flung over-board, which within a few Moments hence will be of no Uſe or Value to me, ſo long as it is in my Power to ſave all my *precious* and *immortal* Fraight; and thereby to ſecure my ſelf of a moſt *happy* and *proſperous* Voyage? Whenever therefore we are threatned with *ſad* Contingencies, or with the Power or Malice of Men, we have *this* Anſwer ready to return to them; God be praiſed, our *main* Happineſs depends not upon you; we can, if we will, go to *Heaven* in deſpight of you, and when once we are *there* we ſhall be far beyond your Reach, and then theſe *light* Afflictions which you now lay upon us, and *which are but for a moment*, will be found unworthy to be compared with that *eternal Glory* which ſhall be revealed to us. Which Conſideration cloſely applied, and deeply imprinted on our Minds, is of *ſufficient* Vertue to eaſe and relieve us under the moſt *calamitous* Circumſtances; for while our *main* Chance and Intereſt is ſafe, all is well with us, and then we

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are ſecure none can prejudice us but our ſelves.

5. And laſtly, another Principle of Peace and Satisfaction of Mind wherewith our *Saviour* hath ſupplyed us is this, that he hath taken Care, during his Abſence from us, to provide for us *ſuch* Supports as are proportionable to every Burthen he will lay upon us. For ſo he tells his *Diſciples*, when he was departing from them, that it was *expedient* for them that he ſhould *go away*, becauſe until he went, according to the *divine* Oeconomy, the *Comforter* was not to come; *but when I depart*, ſaith he, *I will ſend him unto you*, Jo. 16. 7. And accordingly when he departed he ſent down his *holy Spirit* to repreſent himſelf and act as his *Vicegerent* in his *heavenly* Kingdom, and to do all that for us which he himſelf would have done had he continued perſonally preſent with us. So that tho' now he is a great way *off* from us in Perſon, yet by his *Spirit* he is ſtill *preſent* with us; *preſent* with all that *tender* Affection, and with all thoſe *yerning* Bowels of Compaſſion that he expreſs'd towards us while he was upon Earth. And whereas had he continued among us in Perſon he could have been *preſent* with us only at ſuch *determinate* Places and Diſtances, he is now preſent with us where-ever we are, in every Place, and at every

every Diſtance by his *immenſe* Spirit, which like an *Omnipreſent Soul* being diffuſed through all his *Myſtical Body* gives Life and Motion to every Part and Particle of it. And having thus taken Care to ſupply his *perſonal* Abſence from us with this *divine Preſence*, which is every way co-extended to the *utmoſt* Diffuſion of his *Church*, we may depend upon it that where-ever or in what Circumſtances ſoever we are, he is by us, and with us, beholding all our Needs with a *compaſſionate* Heart, and ready to extend to us whatever Aids and Supports we ſtand in need of. How then can we droop in his *bleſſed* Preſence? How can our Hearts ſink while he ſtands by us? What *Evil* is there can ſcare or diſtract our Minds, whilſt we conſider that the *Almighty Spirit* of the *bleſſed Jeſus* our Friend is always and every where with us, ready bent to ſtretch forth his *helping* Hand to ſupport us under every Oppreſſion? Alas! I am afraid *this* Burthen will at length grow *too* heavy for me, that my Strength and Courage will at laſt be forced to yield, and ſink underneath it. Well, tho' you fear *your own* Strength, yet ſure you cannot doubt the Strength and Power of the *Spirit* of *God*, and his Strength is yours to all *neceſſary* Purpoſes as much as it is his own; and therefore unleſs you apprehend your Burthen to be *too* heavy for *his* Power

Power as well as yours, you have no Reaſon to dread that you ſhall ſink underneath the Weight of it. You are afraid leſt you ſhould be called forth to ſuffer for *Righteouſneſs ſake*, and leſt under the Rage and Violence of Perſecution your *Faith* and *Conſtancy* ſhould ſhrink and yield. Why conſider with your ſelves, are there not Thouſands of *Chriſtians* that have ſuffered before you, ſuffered as *terrible* Things as you can poſſibly dread, and this not only with *Patience* and *Conſtancy*, but with *Joy* and *Triumph*? Why then ſhould you ſuſpect that *bleſſed* Spirit which ſupported them, to be leſs able or willing to bear up you? He who hath ſo often enabled ſo many *tender* Virgins, *delicate* Matrons, *infirm* and *aged* Biſhops to ſing in the midſt of Flames, to ſmile upon *Racks*, to triumph upon *Wheels* and *Cataſta's*; and in ſhort, to endure ſuch *long* and *dolorous* Martyrdoms, as many times they did, when their Tormentors took their Turns from Morning to Night, and plyed them with all Kinds of Cruelties till many times they were forced to give over, and confeſs that they had not Heart enough to inflict the Tortures which thoſe *poor* Sufferers had Courage enough to endure: He, I ſay, who hath thus far enabled *them*, can he not as well enable *you*? Is his Arm ſhortned that he cannot ſave, or his Ear grown heavy

heavy that he cannot hear you as well as them? Conſider then, you have the ſame Right that they had by the ſame *never-failing* Promiſe to this his enabling Power, which by ſo many *glorious* Inſtances hath demonſtrated it ſelf ſufficient to ſupport you under the *heavieſt* Oppreſſions; and therefore you have all the reaſon in the world to expect the ſame Aids and Supports from it if ever you ſhould be reduced to the ſame Extremities. Our great Care therefore ought to be that we do not deſert our *Saviour*, either by *wilful* Apoſtacy from his Faith, or Diſobedience to his Laws; for ſo long as we continue faithful to him he cannot leave and deſert us; our main Concern ought to be that we do *our* Part, and not that he doth *his*; for he cannot fail, tho' we may. If we prove *true* to him we may aſſuredly depend upon it that he will prove *true* to us, and not leave us deſtitute of any Help or Support that in any Condition is *neceſſary* for us. If therefore to ſerve the wiſe and *holy* Ends of his Providence he ſhould at any time think it meet to call us to ſuffer, we may ſet our Hearts at reſt upon *this* Aſſurance, that ſo long as we take Care to maintain our Integrity he muſt take Care to maintain our Strength, and not permit us to ſink under any Burthen he lays upon us for want of any degree of Comfort and Support

Support that our State and Condition requires. Which Conſideration duely applyed cannot fail of giving a great deal of Eaſe to our *anxious* and *deſponding* Minds.

Having thus ſhewn at large what *abundant* Proviſion our *Saviour* hath made for the Peace and Satisfaction of our Minds, I ſhall conclude all in a very few Words. Our *bleſſed Saviour* hath long ſince told us that in *this* World we ſhall have Trouble, but that in him we ſhall have *Peace*; which, tho' it were more eminently true in thoſe *early* Days of Suffering and Perſecution, doth yet hold moſt certainly true not only in Times of Peace, but even in the moſt *proſperous* Circumſtances of *humane* Life. For we cannot but know that we are dependent upon Chance; we cannot but know that it is in the Power of *ten thouſand* Contingencies to diſturb us, and this in deſpite of us will create a *great* many *anxious* Thoughts, and vex us with *melancholy* Apprehenſions of our Futurity: And tho' at preſent we may huſh them with Jolity and Mirth, upon the *next* Reflection they will be ſure to awake again, and to revenge themſelves upon us for thoſe Moments of Eaſe we raviſhed from them; and then when any *evil* Accident threatens or approaches us we can give our ſelves no *certain* Aſſurance of eſcaping it. For when we have done all that

that lies within the Compaſs of our *Wiſdom* and *Power*, there may a *thouſand* Croſſes ariſe in our way which it is impoſſible for us either to foreſee or prevent, and turn our moſt *promiſing* Deſigns upon our ſelves, and haſten the *Evil* upon us by thoſe very Means which we chuſe to prevent it; the Senſe of which muſt neceſſarily cauſe many a *ſtinging* Thought to ſwarm about our Minds, and to vex and diſturb us in our *deepeſt* Security. Thus in our *beſt* Eſtate we are *poor* and *indigent* Creatures, fain to ſeek abroad, and to go a begging for our *Happineſs* from Door to Door; to depend upon Chance, and live inſecure of every thing we either poſſeſs, or deſire, or hope for. And conſidering how prone we are to be alarmed with the Proſpect of a *ſad* Futurity, and to magnify *diſtant* Evils in our own Apprehenſions, and to aggravate *preſent* ones by our Impatience and Deſpair; and in a word, to pall our *beſt* Enjoyments by expecting more from them than their Nature will afford; conſidering theſe Things, I ſay, it is the *greateſt* Nonſenſe in the World for Men to expect Peace and Satisfaction of Mind from any thing here below. And if we are thus liable to Diſturbance in our *beſt* Eſtate, alas, what are we in our *worſt!* When Calamities come rolling upon us like the Waves of the Sea upon the back of one *another*, and

we have no Harbour in View to put in at. In this *vaſt* Tumult of things therefore whither ſhall we betake our ſelves for Tranquility and Peace? If we go into the World, every thing in it tells us it is not in me. If we go out of the World into *Deſarts* and *Solitudes*, the Stings we ſhall either find there or carry thither with us will ſoon convince us that it is not in *them*. Where then can we hope to find Peace, but only in *Jeſus the Prince of Peace?* To him therefore let us go with an *humble* Faith and *obedient* Will, with a *reſolved* Mind to adhere to his Truth, and ſubmit to his Laws, and wholly to reſign our ſelves to his Conduct and Government. And if in him you do not find all that *Peace* and *Satisfaction* you have hitherto ſought in vain, never give Credit to any thing that is *ſacred* more. I am ſure it is to be found in *him* if we wiſely, and honeſty, and induſtriouſly ſeek it: Thouſands have found it in *him*, who could find it no where elſe; and having found it have enjoyed themſelves all their Days after in *ſweet* Content and Peace, and at length have breathed out their Souls to him in Praiſes for the *happy* Diſcovery. And therefore if it be not our own fault we may ſoon add our ſelves to this *bleſſed* Number, by devoting our ſelves to him as they did, and ſurrendring our Lives and Intereſts to his Government

verment and Diſpoſal. And when once we have performed *this* with a *ſincere* and *reſolute* Intention, we ſhall by degrees perceive theſe Tempeſts within us quieted and abated, and our *ſtormy* Minds clearing up into an *happy* Serenity; and ſtill as we more and more ſubdue our Wills and Affections to him we ſhall feel and experience our ſelves more and more at Eaſe, until at length we ſhall arrive to ſuch a *ſettled* Peace and Tranquility of Soul as that it will be beyond the Power of any *outward* Concern to diſturb us. And now our Mind will be a Paradiſe to it ſelf, a Paradiſe wherein it will be able to live *contented* and *happy*, and to breath *calm* and *gentle* Thoughts how *tempeſtuous* ſoever its Condition is without. And finding all *compoſed* and *quiet* within, we ſhall lead a Life far more *eaſy*, and *even*, and *conſiſtent* than ever; for now we ſhall no longer reſerve our ſelves to follow Fortune and the Turns of *outward* Affairs, to comply with all the Mutabilities of the Wind, and ſtill to transform our ſelves into *new* Shapes as we are running through the *ſtill-changing* Faſhions of the World. Now we ſhall no longer perplex and intangle our ſelves by *Knaviſh* Tricks and *ſordid* Complyances, by being forced ſtill to ſtudy how to act a *new* Part, and to put on a *new* Garb of Humour and Converſation upon every

new Alteration of Affairs; but our Way will ly *even*, *eaſy*, and *direct* before us, and whatſoever happens to us from *without*, whether it *rains* or *ſhines*, proves *calm* or *tempeſtuous*, the *inward* Peace and Satisfaction we ſhall find in following *Jeſus* by our *firm* Adherence to his Truth, and Obedience to his Laws, will carry us ſafely thro' all Events, and render us far more *happy* even in our *perſecuted* ſincerity than we can reaſonably ſuppoſe to be in the moſt *proſperous* Hypocriſie. Wherefore if ever you intend to be at Reſt within, and to enjoy your ſelves in Peace and Tranquility; go to *Jeſus the Prince and Author of Peace*; Take with you Words and ſay, *O bleſſed Jeſus, hitherto we confeſs other Lords have had Dominion over us, ſuch as Pride and Ambition, Luſt and Avarice; and theſe have all proved unmerciful Tyrants to us, they have continually harraſed and oppreſſed our Minds; they have laid waſte all our Peace, ſtripp'd and plundered us of our Self-enjoyment, and almoſt worn out our Lives in perpetual Troubles and Anxieties. Wherefore now at laſt we return unto thee weary and heavy laden, not only with Guilts but Vexations, reſolving for the future that thee alone we will ſerve. O do not reject us thy oppreſſed and miſerable Creatures, who are driven unto thee for Refuge from thoſe cruel Taſkmaſters that have hitherto raigned over us;*

but

but permit us to ſpend the Remainder of our Days under thy happy Government. We know thy yoak is eaſy, and thy Burthen light; and therefore ſuffer us now at laſt, we beſeech thee, to come unto thee that in thee we may find reſt for our Souls, who have ſought it in vain in every Thing but thee. And having thus ſurrendred up our ſelves to him, let us by our conſtant Perſeverance in *Well-doing* endeavour to ſubdue our ſelves more and more to his Will in this *full* Aſſurance that from our *hearty* and *punctual* Conformity thereunto, we ſhall reap not only *Peace* and *Tranquility* here, but alſo *immortal* Glory and Happineſs *hereafter*: Which we beſeech thee to grant us all of thy *infinite* Mercy, *O bleſſed Jeſu*; to whom with thy *great* Father and *eternal* Spirit be aſcribed of us and all the World all Honour and Glory and Praiſe from this time forth and for evermore. *Amen.*

JAMES I. 8.

A double minded Man is unſtable in all his Ways.

BY a *double-minded Man* here we are to underſtand (as is plain from the Context) an *inſincere* Man, one who pretends to *Religion*, and hath a *good* Inclination towards it, but is not arrived to a *firm* and *prevailing* Reſolution of adhering to it, *maugre* all Temptations to the contrary; that bears ſome *faint* and *ineffectual* Regard to the Rules of his Duty, and the Dictates of his Conſcience, but not ſuch as hath the Superiority over him, and doth command and govern his Life and Converſation; not ſuch as hath that *prevailing* Influence upon him, as to hinder him from being ordinarily counter-ſwayed by his Appetites, or Paſſions, or ſecular Intereſts to the Commiſſion of *unlawful* and *irregular* Actions. So that the *ſingle-minded Man* is one who hath no other Mind, no other *prevailing* Purpoſe and Reſolution, but to adhere to *God* in the Profeſſion and Practiſe of *true* Religion, and upon every Emergency, is ready fix'd to perform what *God* demands of him by the Voice of Revelation and *right* Reaſon; and in a Word, that lives

lives under no other commanding Principle but this, *I will always do what God will have me*: and ſo on the contrary, the *double-minded Man* is one that fluctuates between *Two* Minds and Wills, a Will for *God*, and a Will for the World; and is governed ſometimes by *one*, and ſometimes by *another*, but is never true or conſtant to either. In ſhort, he is one who being yet unſubdued to the *commanding* Power and Influence of Religion, hath no fix'd no determined Mind or Reſolution; but is not only of *ſeveral* Minds upon *ſeveral* Occaſions, but alſo of *contrary* Minds upon *contrary* Occaſions. For his Heart is ſo divided between his *God* and his Intereſt, his Duty and his Luſt, that like a Needle between *Two* Load-ſtones he is always wavering *too* and *again*, and pointing alternately to both, but is never fix'd to either. And of this Man the Apoſtle tells us, *That he is unſtable in all his Ways*. Where by *Ways* according to the *Hebrew Phraſeology*, he means Actions; he is unſtable in all his Actions, that is, he always acts with an *anxious*, *doubtful*, and *miſgiving* Mind; he knows not where to find himſelf, nor many times which way to turn himſelf; he leads a very *uncertain*, *inſecure*, and *unquiet* Life, being all along perplexed and intangled in the whole Courſe of his

Actions. The Words thus explained may be reſolved into this Propoſition;

That whilſt Mens Minds are divided between *God* and their Luſts, and are not intirely ſubdued to *his* Will; they muſt neceſſarily lead very *anxious*, *inſecure*, *unſtable* Lives: That till ſuch time as we Act from an *intire* Submiſſion of our Souls to *God*, we can never act ſteadily and ſecurely, but muſt be always fluctuating in great Anxiety and Uncertainty.

The *Wiſe Man* tells us, that, *He that walketh uprightly, walketh ſurely* Prov. 10. 9. He goes on in a *direct*, *ſecure*, and *even* Courſe of Action, wherein there is no Perplexity, or Intanglement; whereas the Life of a *double-minded* Hypocrite whoſe Heart is divided between *God* and the World, is a *perpetual* Maze and Labarinth, wherein the farther he goes, the more he is loſt and confounded. And this will evidently appear upon the following Conſiderations.

1. That he acts upon no *fixed* or *certain* Principles.
2. That the Way and Courſe of his Actions is all *obſcure* and *intricate*.
3. That he is always fain to live in a *Diſguiſe*, and is therein inſecure of Concealment.

4. That

4. That he is always at odds with himſelf, and in *perpetual* Variance with *his own* Reaſon.

5. That he is at a *miſerable* Uncertainty as to the *preſent* Events and Iſſues of *his own* Actions.

6 That he hath a moſt *diſmal* Proſpect before him of the *final* Iſſue, and Event of all.

1. The *double-minded* Man acts upon no *fixed* or *certain* Principles. For the Principles he proceeds upon are ſuch as have no Foundation in the Nature of Things, but, like Caſtles in the Air, are built upon *meer* Dreams and Deluſions, which whenever his Reaſon awakes, will ſink and diſappear. For either he lives upon no Principles at all, but acts like the Beaſts that Periſh, upon *blind* Inſtincts, and the *unaccountable* Impulſes of his *brutal* Senſe; or upon ſuch Principles as theſe, that there is no ſuch *Being* in the World as an *eternal, and inviſible, almighty Power*; or that if there be, he lives retired from us, and takes no Notice of what we do; or that if he doth, 'tis as an *unconcern'd* Spectator to whom it is purely indifferent whether we do *Good* or *Evil*; or that if he be at all pleaſed with our *good* Deeds, and diſpleaſed with our *bad*, yet it is not to any ſuch Degree, as to intail any *future* Rewards upon

on the *one*, or Puniſhments on the *other*; or that if there be any ſuch Rewards and Puniſhments prepared by him, they are ſo *ſlight* and *inconſiderable*, that the Loſs of the *one*, and Sufferance of the *other*, are abundantly compenſated by the *preſent* Pleaſure of a ſinful Life; or in fine, that if neither the *one* nor the *other* prove true, yet we may ſecurely enjoy theſe Pleaſures while we are able, and by repenting at laſt when we are old or dying, and are able to enjoy them no longer, may intitle our ſelves to *thoſe* Rewards, whatſoever they are, and ſecure our ſelves from *thoſe* Puniſhments. This is the Chain of Principles, upon which *bad* Men live and act, if they act upon any at all, and which are all of them grounded upon ſuch *doubtful* Preſumptions, ſuch *thin* Pretences, and *unſatisfactory* Reaſonings, as no Man in his Wits can ever be throughly ſecure of. For beſides that they contradict the *beſt* and *wiſeſt* Part of the World, the *current* Senſe of *humane* Nature, and the *common* Conſent of all Mankind, which are ſuch Prejudices againſt them, as muſt neceſſarily render them very doubtful at leaſt; beſides all this, I ſay, they have ſo *ſtrong* a Current of Evidence againſt them, and are over-powered with ſuch a Force of Arguments from all the Quarters of *Reaſon* and *Reli-*

Religion, and the contrary Principles are ſo much more agreeable to all the Appearances of Things, to the *ſacred Oracles*, to *human* Society, and to the very Frame of *human* Nature; and in a Word, have every way ſo *vaſt* an Over-weight of Reaſon on their ſide, that it is impoſſible for any Man in a *cold* Mind to be confident that they are true, how much ſoever it may be his Intereſt to wiſh them ſo. So that whereas the *ſincere* and *upright* Man living, as he doth, upon *well-tried* Principles that for their Truth have been always found moſt *agreable* to Reaſon, and for their Uſefulneſs always approved by *conſtant* Experience, treads firmly and boldly, being ſecure of the Ground he goes upon; the *double-minded* Hypocrite, being all along uncertain of the Grounds of his Action, walks like a *benighted* Traveller in a *dangerous* Road, where he is fain to feel out his way, and to tread tenderly, and cautiouſly, leſt his next ſtep ſhould be into a Bogg or a Precipice. And ſo long as he is *inſecure* of the Principles upon which he acts, he can never be ſecure that he acts ſafely. He knows that if the Principles he goes upon prove *falſe*, he is undone, and whether they will prove ſo or no, he is at beſt uncertain; and ſo through the whole Courſe of his Sin and Life, he walks with

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an *anxious* and *miſgiving* Mind, and goes trembling on between Hope and Fear to the *final* iſſue and Event, which for all he knows may prove ſuch as will put an end to all his Hopes for ever. For *maugre* all his Confidence, he cannot be ſure but that when he dies, he may find all the Principles he acts on, baffled by a *woful* Experience; he may then feel that there is a *God* to whom Vengeance belongs, and an *eter-eternal* Life of Rewards and Puniſhments; and if he ſhould, how will it blank and amaze him, to find himſelf, inſtead of being reduced to an *inſenſible* Subſtance, landed on a *ſtrange inhoſpitable* Shore, inhabited with *ghaſtly* Furies, and *miſerable* Ghoſts, and ſhut up with them by a *vaſt ſurrounding* Gulph in *everlaſting* Horror and Deſpair: and therefore ſeeing he can have no Security, but that ſuch may be the *fatal* Cloſe of his ſinful Life, he muſt, when ever he *cooly* reflects, be miſerably *anxious*, and *uneaſie*, and expect the mighty Event with Dread, and *dire* Abodings.

2. The Way and Courſe of a *double-minded* Man's Actions is all *obſcure* and *intricate*. For whereas the Courſe of an *honeſt*, *upright* Man is for the main of it chalked out to his hands, both by *divine* Revelation, and the *natural* and *eternal* Reaſons of Things, and

and that ſo plainly, and clearly, that as ſoon as he opens his Eyes, he may eaſily diſcern it without any great Reach of Wit, or Depth of Judgment; the Rule of his Actions being *open* and *direct*, without any *dark* Subtilties, or *intricate* Windings and Turnings; the *falſe pretending* Hypocrite lives in a Maze, wherein having no *certain* Rule to go by, he is very often at a loſs which way to direct himſelf. For having forſaken the plain Paths which *God* hath deſcribed to him, he is put upon inventing a Way for himſelf, of ſtudying *his own* Steps, and groping to his End through a *Labyrinth* of *popular* Errors and Miſtakes; in which he is oftentimes *ſo* loſt and bewildered, that he knows neither where he is, nor whither to go next; and ſometimes the Way that he takes lies quite *croſs* to his Ends, and ſometimes leads him about in ſuch a *wide* Compaſs, that by that time he arrives at them, they are not worth his Travel; and even when he thinks himſelf *moſt* in the right, and goes on with the *fulleſt* Aſſurance, Time and Chance many times caſt up ſo many Difficulties and *perplexing* Intercurrencies in his Way, as do puzzle all his Wit and Contrivance how to break through them. Thus when men leave God's Way which is a *plain*, a *ſure*, and *infallible* one, and commit themſelves

ſelves to the Conduct of their own *blind* Wills and *ſhort-ſighted* Reaſon; they forſake the Light of the Sun to follow a *Night-fire*, which inſtead of conducting them in the *plain* and *direct* Way, carries them at random about in the Dark, leads them *hither* and *thither*, *backwards* and *forwards*, over Hedges and Ditches, through Breaks and Bogs, till they are loſt and maz'd in *their own* Wandrings. While they walk in God's Way, they have God's *Wiſdom* for their Guide, which cannot miſlead them; there they have nothing to do, but to follow the *eaſie* Directions of an *infallible* Mind, to receive his Commands, and to obey them; there they are free from all the Trouble of forming *new* Reſolutions, and inventing *new* Meaſures of Action upon new Emergencies; there they ſee their way plainly deſcribed to them, and are reſolved once for all to purſue it through all Events, without any further Pauſe or Deliberation, being fully ſatisfied in themſelves, that it is much *ſafer* for them to follow God's Will, which acts from *infinite* Goodneſs, by *infinite* Wiſdom, with *infinite* Power, than to follow *their own* which they know by *woful* Experience is ſo liable to be impoſed upon by falſe Shews and Appearances; and to miſtake *Poyſon* for *Phyſick*, and *Evil* for *Good*. Thus while

while they are in God's Way, they find all things *direct*, and *plain*, and *eaſie* to them, but when they divert into *their own*, there they have nothing to guide them but a *vain fooliſh* Mind that is eaſily trick'd and impoſed upon, and a blind *Appetite* that is conducted by a *roaving* Imagination; there they are fain to live by their Wits, upon *extemporary* Shifts and Evaſions, and ſtill to invent *new* Ways upon *new* Occaſions, and to wander about in a *myſterious* Labyrinth of *little* Tricks and Contrivances, which inſtead of extricating them out of the Difficulties of Life, do commonly but more and more perplex and intangle them. And hence, as *the Path of the Juſt* is in Scripture deſcribed to be *as the ſhining Light* Prov. 4. 18. to have *nothing froward or perverſe in them*, and to be *plain to him that underſtandeth* Prov. 8. 8, 9. and to be an *even Place*, where *none of his Steps ſhall ſlide*. Pſal. 26. 12. compar'd with 37. 31. So on the other ſide *the Paths of the Wicked* are ſaid to be *dark and crooked*, Prov. 2. 13. 15. and to be uneven *and ſlippery* Jer. 23. 12. And in ſuch a way as *this*, how is it poſſible for a Man to walk firmly and ſtably?

3. The *double-minded* Man is always fain to live in a Diſguiſe, and is therein very *inſecure*, of Concealment; and this alſo renders

ders him *unſtable in all his ways*: Tho' conſidering what a *falſe* and *ill-natur'd* World we live in, it is many times an *honeſt* and *neceſſary* Prudence for a Man to reſerve his Mind, and not proclaim even his *faireſt* Intentions in every ones Ear with whom he converſes. But for a Man to live in a *continual* Diſguiſe, and always look *one* Way, and row *another*, to counterfeit and diſſemble, and mask his *real* Intentions with *contrary* Appearances, is a very *uneaſie* Way of living; for there is *twice* the Difficulty in every Thing that he aims and drives at, as there is in an *honeſt* and *above-board* Procedure. Here *honeſt* Ends are purſued by *direct* Means, without need of any Colour or Artifice; whereas, *there* commonly more Art is required to juſtifie the Means, than to manage them; and to diſſemble the Ends, than to obtain them, For whilſt the Ends a Man propoſes be *foul* and *diſhoneſt*, he muſt in his own Defence pretend quite contrary to *his own* Intentions; and to form and manage his Pretenſions ſo artificially, as to conceal his *bad* Intentions under them, till they are executed, is commonly the *greateſt* Difficulty in the Execution of them. For tho' Men may be *fooliſh* enough, yet they are not *good-natur'd* enough to be always impoſed upon by *fair* Pretences; their very

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ill Nature makes them jealous and ſuſpicious, and their Jealouſie and Suſpicion makes them prying and inquiſitive. And what a deal of Art muſt it require for a Man to conceal himſelf, and carry on his *ill* Aims with any *plauſible* Colour, when he hath ſo many *jealous* and *inquiſitive* Eyes upon him? And then for a Man to diſſemble, is an outrage to himſelf, 'tis to act againſt the Grain of *his own* Nature by making an *outward* Shew and Appearance of that which he *inwardly* hates. For while a Man pretends to be *that* which he is not, he muſt ſeem in his Actions to be that *which* he is moſt averſe to, and all the while he doth ſo, he thwarts himſelf, and acts directly contrary to his own Inclinations. If his *wicked* Aims did not force him to hide himſelf, while he is making a *formal* Shew of Mortification, he would much rather be ſatiating his *hungry* Luſts; while he is hanging down his Head like a Bul-ruſh to diſguiſe his *Pride* and *Ambition*, he would much rather be *ſtrutting*, *inſulting*, and *domineering*; while he is giving his *Alms to be ſeen of Men*, he would much rather be *grinding* and *oppreſſing* the Poor; and whilſt in order to his devouring *Widows houſes* he is making *long Prayers*, he would much rather be glutting his Avarice with the Spoil. So that all

the while he pretends to be the *contrary* to what he is, he muſt practiſe the *contrary* to what he is inclined, and while he doth ſo, he offers a *perpetual* Force and Violence to himſelf. Now what an *uneaſie* Way of living muſt this be, for a Man to be always ſtudying how to conceal himſelf, and to be forced to live in a Diſguiſe that he hates? and yet this is the Life of the *double-minded* Man that trains between *God* and the World. And then that which adds to his Uneaſineſs is, that after all he can never be ſecure of his Diſguiſe; he knows that if he ſhould be diſcovered through it, it would quite ſpoil his Game, and inſtead of ſetting a Gloſs upon his *foul* Intentions, it would only render them more *ugly* and *odious*; there being nothing can render Wickedneſs more ugly than it is, but the Diſcovery and Appearance of it through the Vail of Sanctity. So that if ever his *wicked* Intentions ſhould happen to be diſcovered, they will be ſure to fare the worſe for their being diſguiſed, and 'tis a Thouſand to One, but *firſt* or *laſt* ſome Accident or *other* detects and unmasks them; and then they are for ever baffled and diſappointed. So that this *double-minded* Hypocrite walks like a Malefactor in a Vizard, afraid of every one that looks wiſhly upon him, jealous of being betray'd even by *his*

own

own Voice, or Shape, or Deportment, full of *anxious* Thoughts, leſt by ſome Accident or *other* his Vizard ſhould drop *off* and diſcover him; being conſcious to himſelf, that if ever the *Myſtery* of his Iniquity ſhould be unfolded, and what he hath acted *behind* the Curtain ſhould be brought to Light, he ſhall not only loſe all the Credit and Advantage of the *Part* he hath hitherto ſo *artificially* acted, but alſo be hiſs'd *off* the Stage with Scorn and Infamy. And how then is it poſſible for a Man to walk ſteadily under ſuch *ſlippery* Circumſtances, when he dances upon a Rope as it were, where if he trips he falls, and if he falls is ruined.

4. He is always at odds with himſelf, and in *perpetual* Variance with *his own* Reaſon. There is a Senſe in Mens Souls that doth as naturally diſtinguiſh between *Good* and *Evil*, as their Taſt doth between *bitter* and *ſweet*, and is equally pleaſed or offended by them. Whilſt therefore *this* Senſe remains alive within us, and in any Degree *quick* and *perceptive*, every Touch and Impreſſion of *Evil* will *more* or *leſs* pain and aggrieve it, and till with the *cuſtomary* Impreſſions of *Evil* a Man hath ſear'd and ſtupifi'd his Senſe of it, he will never be able to ſin in quiet for it, but upon every *cold* Reflection on *his own* ill Courſes, will feel a *ſenſible*

Remorſe and Compunction. And this is inevitable to the *double minded* Man, who divides himſelf between *God* and his Luſts; for he retains ſo much of *God*, as will always keep his Senſe of *Good* and *Evil* alive, and together with *it*, he retains ſo much of his Luſts, as will always diſturb and offend it: ſo that at once he takes *effectual* Care both to preſerve his Senſe of *Evil* quick and vigorous, and to be perpetually vexing it with the *painful* Impreſſions of Evil, and ſo treats himſelf, as heretofore the Tormentors did the *ſuffering* Martyrs, who gave them Cordials to keep them alive, only to enable them to ſuſtain more Torments. If he would wholly abandon *God* he might thereby extinguiſh his Senſe of *Evil*, or if he would wholly abandon his Luſts, he might thereby prevent his ſenſation of *Evil*; but while he retains *both*, he retains both Senſe for his Torment, and Torment for his Senſe, and at once cheriſhes the *Evil* that afflicts his Senſe, and preſerves his Senſe alive to endure the Affliction. There are no Two Things in the World can leſs endure one *another* in the *ſame* Breaſt than a *ſenſible* Conſcience and a *wicked* Will, which like *Fire* and *Water* will be continually ſtruggling till either the *one* is quenched, or the *other* evaporated. The Will will not let the Conſci-

ſcience be quiet, nor the Conſcience the Will; and ſo thoſe *Two Commanding* Powers of our Souls will live in *perpetual* Variance, and admit of no *other* Intercourſe but *mutual* Violences and Outrages, till either the *one* is extinguiſhed, or the *other* ſubdued. Whilſt therefore a Man's Mind is *double* and *divided*, his Soul is in a State of War, there being *Two irreconcilable* Parties perpetually ſtruggling within his Breaſt; a Law in his *Mind* fighting againſt the Law in his *Members*, his *Reaſon* againſt his *Appetite*, his Conſcience againſt his Will; ſo that he can take neither Part without doing Violence to himſelf. If he ſides with his Conſcience, he *outrages* his Will, if he ſides with his Will he *forces* his Conſcience; If he take part with his Appetite, he makes War with his Reaſon; if he complies with his Reaſon, he bids defiance to his Appetite Thus which way ſoever he determins himſelf, he is ſure to determine againſt *one* Part of himſelf; and it can never be otherwiſe till *one* of theſe *adverſe* Parts of himſelf are ſubdued, and his *double* Mind is reduced to a *ſingle* one. When he hath but *one* Mind, whether it be a *good* or a *bad* one, he will be at Peace and Unity with himſelf; but before he can have one *good* Mind, he muſt form a *good* Reſolution, and follow it till he hath intirely

ſubdued his Will and Appetite to his Reaſon and Conſcience, and then the *inteſtine* War will conclude in a *happy* Peace; and ſo on the contrary, before he can have one *bad* Mind, he muſt abandon himſelf to all *Ungodlineſs* and *worldly Luſts*, and continually drink *in* Iniquity as the Horſe drinks *in* Water, till he hath intoxicated his Reaſon with it, and ſtupified his Conſcience; and then the *inteſtine* Struggle will conclude in a *lethargick* Quiet and Inſenſibility: But to arrive at *this*, is far more difficult than it is to acquire the *former*; for while a Man contends with his Reaſon and Conſcience, he contends with his *original* Nature, and to vanquiſh *that*, is far more difficult than to ſubdue his *wicked* Will, and *inordinate* Appetite, which are but his *acquired* Nature, and conſequently doth not ſo inſeparably adhere to him, nor is ſo inveterate. But till his Conſcience and his Reaſon are intirely vanquiſhed, they will be ſtruggling and contending; and whilſt they do ſo, he will be continually at *Odds* and *Variance* with himſelf. He muſt act all along with a *Self-condemning* Mind, and be content to endure the Reproaches of his Reaſon, and the Clamours of his Conſcience; and while he doth ſo, he can never act ſteadily and ſecurely. For whilſt his Reaſon, which is to be his Guide,

Guide, is diſſatisfied with his Way, it is impoſſible for him to walk on without *Diffidence* and *Anxiety*; at every Step he muſt tread with Diſtruſt, and proceed with a *trembling* Heart, leſt the Ground ſhould ſink under him; and while he thus walks with a *miſgiving* Conſcience, and an *ill-aboding* Mind, it is impoſſible but he muſt be *unſtable in all his ways.*

5. He is at a *miſerable* Uncertainty as to the *preſent* Event and Iſſue of his Actions. He knows, or at leaſt he ſhrewdly ſuſpects, that there is a *wiſe* and *all-ſeeing*, a *juſt* and *Almighty* Providence that over-rules all *Cauſes*, and diſpoſes of all *Events*, and without which there is nothing can ſucceed how wiſely ſoever it is deſigned and projected. He knows that in this *ſuperintending* Power and Providence there is an *eſſential* Goodneſs and rectitude of Nature, which invariably inclines it to *love* and *bleſs* Goodneſs and Righteouſneſs, and to *hate* and *curſe* their contraries in whomſoever it finds them; and being thus perſuaded he cannot but conclude himſelf inſecure whilſt he either aims at *unjuſt* Ends, or uſes *unjuſt* Means to obtain them, both the *one* and the *other* being infinitely odious to *that overruling* Power upon which his Succeſs depends. For he muſt either imagine that the

moſt *probable* Way to oblige *this* Power to ſucceed him is to brave and *hector* it into a *fawning* Complyance with his Wiſhes, than which there is nothing more abſurd and unreaſonable; or be at leaſt infinitely *jealous* and *ſuſpitious* that the *wicked* Courſes he takes will, inſtead of obliging it to proſper them, arm its Vengeance againſt them, and provoke it to determine them in ſome *dire* Event. For if *God* hath the diſpoſal of all *Events* whether *good* or *evil*, it is certainly every whit as reaſonable a Project for a Man to drink *deadly* Poyſon to obtain his Health, or to commit *high* Treaſon to eſcape hanging, as to endeavour to obtain any *Good*, or to eſcape any *Evil* by ſuch Courſes as *God* hates and abhors. For if the Way to obtain *his* Favour is to pleaſe him, and the Way to pleaſe him is to do what is pleaſing to him, as moſt certainly it is; then it is as evident as any Propoſition in the *Mathematicks*, that he who endeavours by ſuch Courſes as he knows are diſpleaſing to him to obtain any *Good* or avoid any *Evil* with God's diſpoſal, uſes the moſt *contrary Means* to effect his Ends, and only ſpends his Pains to *thwart* and *countermine* himſelf. The *double-minded* Man therefore being conſcious to himſelf that he hath rendred *God* his Enemy can never be reaſonably

ably ſecure in *his own* Mind of obtaining any *Good*, or eſcaping any *Evil* that is in God's diſpoſal. For tho' to ſerve the *wiſe* Ends of his Providence *God* many times gratifies bad Men, and gives them their *own* Hearts deſire, yet for them to expect any *Good* at his hands, whilſt the whole Courſe of their Actions is a *continued* Provocation of him, is the moſt *unreaſonable* Preſumption in the World; 'tis to ſuppoſe him not only *inſenſible* of Affronts and Injuries, but alſo *fond* of them, *pleaſed* and *delighted* with them to *that* Degree as to own himſelf obliged to crown and reward them with his Favours; For unleſs it be this, there is nothing they can fancy in the Nature of *God* that can incline him to be kind to them. While therefore they are in Purſuit of any *Good*, or in Flight from any *Evil*, if any *wiſe* Thought ariſe in their Mind concerning the *Event*, it muſt be very *anxious* and *deſponding*. There is ſuch a *Good* in my View which I would fain enjoy, and am reſolved to uſe my *utmoſt* Endeavour to compaſs; but alas it is in the Diſpoſal of *God* who is the *Soveraign* Arbitrator of my Fate, and unleſs he will be ſo kind as to award it to me, my *utmoſt* Skill and Conduct in the proſecution of it will prove inſignificant; But how can I hope that

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he will ſucceed my Deſign, who hath ſo many Reaſons to be my *mortal* Enemy; and if he will not, he hath ten Thouſand Accidents under his Command by any *one* of which he can baffle and defeat me; and if he ſhould gratify my Deſire, I have no reaſon to believe that it is out of Kindneſs; and if it be not, inſtead of a *Bleſſing* it will proye a *Curſe* to me. There is ſuch an *Evil* hangs over me that I would fain eſcape, and am reſolved to imploy my *utmoſt* Care and Induſtry to prevent it; but when I have done all, it is in the hand of *God* whoſe Vengeance I have armed againſt me by a Thouſand Provocations; and if he will bring it upon me (which I have too much cauſe to fear) he can do it by thoſe very *Means* whereby I am endeavouring to prevent it. And if he ſhould ſucceed my Endeavours, I have *juſt* Ground to ſuſpect that it will be in Diſpleaſure to me; and then it will prove but the Removal of a *leſs* Evil to make way for a *greater*. Thus if he truly reaſon with himſelf concerning the *Events* of *his own* Actions, it muſt create in him *infinite* Deſpondence and Anxiety. And whilſt a Man thus lives in Fear of the *Event* it will be impoſſible for him to act with *any* Steadineſs or ſecurity. This therefore is the Caſe of the *double-minded* Man, who being conſcious

conſcious to himſelf that all *Events* are in God's Diſpoſal, whom he hath ſo many ways provoked to be his Enemy, muſt neceſſarily act with a *dubious* and *trembling* Mind, being ſo uncertain within himſelf whether *that* which he is doing will iſſue in his Benefit or Bane.

6. And laſtly, He hath a moſt *diſmal* Proſpect before him of the *final* Iſſue and Event of all. Whenever he caſts his Eyes beyond this *preſent* Scene of Things, wherein his Mind is toſſed *to* and *fro* in ſuch *infinite* Uncertainties; there he ſees nothing but *diſmal* Horror and Tragedy, nothing but *Darkneſs*, *Wretchedneſs* and *Deſpair*; nothing but *Famine* to his Appetites, *Anguiſh* to his Mind, and *Torment* to his Conſcience; nothing to accompany him but *Devils* and *damned Ghoſts*, nothing to entertain him but *horrible* Thoughts and *dire* Reflections; which *woful* Proſpect; if he hath not out ſinned all Senſe, muſt neceſſarily alarm all his Fears, and ſtrike his very *Soul* into an Agony. And when a Man thus feels his *preſent* State bad, and foreſees that the *future* will be ten Thouſand Times worſe, he muſt be a *perfect* Sot or a *miſerable* Wretch. Whilſt he is walking through this *ſhort* Incloſure of Time here, at every Step he feels himſelf prick'd and torn by *his own* Cares,

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and Fears, and Anxieties, which like Bryars and Thorns grow up round about him; and when he looks over the Pale into the *vaſt* Field of *Eternity*, there he ſees nothing but *dire* and *horrid* Spectacles, nothing but *burning* Wrath and Vengeance attending to perſecute him to *eternal* Ages. So that whether he looks *backwards* or *forwards*, or but juſt before him, his Eyes can find nothing but *uncomfortable* Objects. That which is *paſt* is all *taſtleſs* and *inſipid*; that which is *preſent* is moſtly *nauſeous* and *unpalatable*; but that which is *to come* is all *dire* and *intollerable*; and this is the ſting of his Miſery. Were his *paſt* or *preſent* Circumſtances far worſe than they are, they were *eaſy* to be born in the Proſpect of a more *comfortable* Futurity; but when *this* is worſe, ten thouſand times worſe than the worſt of what is either *paſt* or *preſent*, for a Man to paſs through all theſe *ſad* Things together with any Patience or Content requires the Hardineſs and Inſenſibility of a Stone. It is ſad enough, *God* knows, to walk through the Cares, and Fears, and Diſquietudes which naturally attend a *falſe* and *double* Mind; but to walk through all *theſe* within full view of Hell, and at every Step to perceive ones ſelf approaching *nearer* and *nearer* to it; is to paſs through a moſt *diſmal* Expectation

on to a more *diſmal* Experience, which is doubtleſs the moſt *woful* Condition that *humane* Life can be expoſed to. And yet this is the Condition of the *double-minded Man*; who acts his Sin with an Expectation of ſuffering eternally for it, and robs within ſight of the Place of Execution. And when with that *Perſian* Judge he is thus condemned to ſit out all his Days with the Sword of *eternal* Vengeance hanging over him by a *frail* Thread of Life, which is every moment in danger of breaking; how is it poſſible he ſhould enjoy *himſelf* in any tolerable Degree of *Peace* and *Security* of Mind. Doubtleſs if he hath any ſenſe of danger, the Foreſight of ſo great a one as *this* of being *miſerable* for ever, muſt neceſſarily create in him a *proportionable* Fear and Anxiety, and conſequently render him very *unſtable in all his Ways*.

What then remains but that ſeeing the State of *Hypocrites* and *double-minded Men* is ſo *wretched*, and *miſerable*, and *inſecure*, we all of us from henceforth reſolve, as we tender *our own* Eaſe and Quiet, to lay aſide all *Hypocriſy* and *Double-dealing*, and act through the remaining Part of our Lives with *Plainneſs*, *Integrity*, and *Simplicity* of Mind. Of which way of living if you would once be perſuaded to make a *through* Expe-

Experiment, I dare engage you would find it abundantly more *ſecure*, and *eaſy*, and *comfortable* than that which you have hitherto purſued. And to convince you of the Truth of this, I will crave leave in a few Words to repreſent to you the *Reverſe* of the *double-minded* Man's Life, and to ſhew you the *oppoſite* Advantages of living honeſtly and uprightly.

1. He who lives uprightly goes upon *firm* and *ſtanch* Principles, ſuch as theſe, that there is a *God* that governs the World, that inſpects all the Thoughts and Actions of Men, and will reward or puniſh them with *eternal* Happineſs or Miſery; which being founded upon as *full* Evidence as the Nature of the Thing will bear, and atteſted by the *inmoſt* ſenſe of *humane* Nature, by the Conſent of *wiſe* Men of all Ages, Nations, and Religions, and in ſhort by the *unanimous* Vote of Mankind, are ſuch as will endure the Teſt of our *ſevereſt* Reaſon, and give *ample* Satisfaction of their Truth to the moſt *inquiſitive* Minds. The *upright* Man therefore proceeding upon ſuch Principles as theſe treads upon *firm* ground, which he is ſecure will never ſink under him, and which is more, if it ſhould will in the End leave him in as *good* Condition as thoſe who proceed upon the *contrary* Princi-

Principles. For whereas if their Principles prove falſe, their acting upon them will prove their *eternal* Ruin, if his ſhould prove ſo, he will live more at Eaſe for them, more ſuitably to his Nature, and more ſatisfied with himſelf; and when he dies, he will only be left in the *ſame* Condition with *them*, in a State of *eternal* Sleep and Inſenſibility. So that if his Principles ſhould prove *falſe*, he can never be the worſe for acting upon them; but if they ſhould prove *true*, he will be infinitely the better. And 'tis a vaſt ſecurity to the Mind to proceed upon ſuch Principles as, if they prove *falſe*, will leave us *ſafe* and at *reſt*, and if they prove *true* will leave us *eternally* happy.

2. The *upright Man* walks in a *plain*, *eaſy*, and *direct* Way. Thoſe *eternal* Tracts of Righteouſneſs and Goodneſs wherein he walks are ſo plainly *characterized* upon his Heart and Conſcience by the Finger of *God*, and deſcribed and inculcated in the *divine* Oracles with ſo *bright* a Sun-beam, that if he honeſtly enquire he cannot miſs them, and when he hath found them he cannot eaſily ſwerve from them. For whereas Wickedneſs is a *boundleſs* Wilderneſs whoſe Paths do all *thwart* and *croſs* one *another*, all Vices con-

conſiſting in Extremes which are *direct* Contraries, and being either the Defects or Exceſſes of ſome Virtue; ſo that there are not only *two* Vices to every *one* Vertue, but both are Extremes running counter to one another: the Paths of Virtue lye ſtraight forward between theſe *vicious* Extremes, and like *parallel Lines* never interfere. So that here a Man may walk on ſafely without any *great* Reach of Wit, or *laborious* Diligence of Enquiry, and needs do no more than follow *Solomons* Direction; *Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eye-lids look ſtraight before thee. Turn not to the right hand, nor to the left.* Prov. 4. 24. 27. Here, according to the Prophet, is *an high-way, called the way of holineſs; the way-faring men, tho' fools, ſhall not err therein,* Iſaiah 35. 8. And having ſo *plain* and *direct* a way before him he needs neither tire himſelf in the ſearch of it, nor rack his Brains with any *anxious* Deliberations in the Choice of it, nor grate his Mind with Scruples and *galling* Regrets in the Purſuit of it; but may always find it with Eaſe, and follow it with Security.

3. The *upright* Man acts *openly* and without fear of Diſcovery; for being conſcious to himſelf both that his Intentions are *clear*, and his Proſecutions of them *fair* and *honeſt*,

honeſt, he could be well enough content that he had a *Window* into his Breaſt that all the world might ſee through him. He knows that his Thoughts and Actions are ſuch as will endure ſounding, and bear ſifting to the Bottom; and therefore takes no care to diſguiſe himſelf in *falſe* ſhews and Appearances. For he who can reflect upon *himſelf* with Satisfaction and Complacency may look all the World in the face with Confidence and Aſſurance; as knowing that the more *curiouſly* he is watch'd, and the more exactly he is ſcanned, the more highly he ſhall be approved by all that are *wiſe* and *good*. And tho' his Reputation may for a while be clouded by *Malice* or *Miſtake*, yet he is fully ſatisfied that *one* time or *other* the very Light of Things will ſcatter theſe *Miſts*, and clear theſe *Miſpriſions*, and that then he ſhall ſhine the *brighter* for being *over-caſt*. And being thus ſatisfied he walks openly through the World with a *bare* Face, and in the ſight of the Sun, having no Occaſion to Skulk into Coverts and Retirements.

4. The *upright* Man lives in Peace with himſelf, and in an *amicable* Accord with his own Reaſon and Conſcience. For he who follows his Reaſon, and makes his Conſcience his Guide (as every *upright* Man doth)

can neither be reproached by the *one*, nor condemned by the *other*; And having to all his Aims and Actions the *full* Approbation of his Reaſon and Conſcience in *reiterated* Echos reſounding after him, he hath always *good* Weather within and a *clear* Sky about him, wherein his Mind breaths none but *calm* and *wholſome* Thoughts, and hath a *hopeful* Confidence, and a *chearful* Satisfaction in every Thing he doth, as being *agreeable* to *his own* Reaſon, *conformable* to his Duty, and *worthy* of himſelf. And being thus crowned with the Applauſes of *his own* Conſcience, he goes on through all the *Difficulties* of Life with Alacrity and Courage, having nothing from within to countermand or controul him, no Sting of *Remorſe* for what he hath done, nor *Check* or *Struggling* againſt what he is doing; nothing to pull him back from his way, or to cauſe him to halt in it, or any way to diſturb and diſtract him in his Motion. And when at any time he is balk'd and defeated in any of his *honeſt* Deſigns and Proſecutions, he goes on with an *exact* Mind under the Diſappointment, triumphing in the Integrity of his Heart and the Innocence of his Procedure, having a Paradiſe *within* him where he lives at Eaſe, and enjoys himſelf in Serenity and Peace; let Things be never ſo *ſtormy* and *tempeſtuous* without.

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5. The *upright* Man is ſecure of the *good* Iſſues and Events of his *honeſt* Aims and Proſecutions. Not that he is confident that Things ſhall always ſucceed according to his *preſent* Aims and Deſires; but this he is ſure of, that they ſhall always ſucceed as *God* would have them, who is *wiſer* than he, and loves him better than he loves himſelf. He is ſatisfied with *this*, that *God* will never croſs him but for very *good* Reaſons; ſuch Reaſons, as if he himſelf did fully comprehend, would make him heartily wiſh that *God* in his *tender* Mercy would croſs and diſappoint him; and living under this Perſuaſion, he is ſecure in *his own* Mind that he ſhall either have what he deſires, or ſomething better in Exchange. He builds upon this, that if what he is projecting be *good* for him, it ſhall certainly ſucceed according to his Wiſhes; but that whether it be *good* for him or no, *God* knows better than he, and therefore if it doth not ſucceed, it is well for him that it doth not; becauſe *God* certainly knew that it was not *good* for him that it ſhould: And to be diſappointed of thoſe Hopes which he fancies are *good* for him, is a Thouſand Times more for his Intereſt than to be gratified, which *God* knows will be *hurtful* to him; becauſe he is certain, both that he may be

miſtaken, and that God cannot. Wherefore let the worſt that *can* arrive, (or that which through his Blindneſs and Folly he eſteems the worſt;) this he depends upon, that matters being rightly ſtated, he ſhall in the Iſſue of Things come *off* very well, ſo as to be a Gainer in the foot of the Account; and being thus perſuaded, his Mind is not harraſed like other Mens, with *anxious* Thoughts concerning the Event, but let what will happen, he goes on with a *calm* and *ſatisfied* Mind, and embraces his Fortune with Satisfaction and Complacency.

6. And laſtly, He hath a *fair* and *glorious* Proſpect before him of the Iſſue and Events of all. The Senſe of *his own* Integrity and Uprightneſs hath raiſed him to a *glorious* Hope, whereon he ſtands, like *Moſes* on the Top of *Piſgah*, ſurveying the *heavenly Canaan*, whoſe *fruitful* Soil abounds with every *Good*, and flows with *everlaſting* Pleaſure: From whence with *joyful* Eyes he ſees the *happy* Period of his *tedious* March through this *barren* Wilderneſs of Life: He ſees the *bliſful* Manſions and Abodes, that the *God* of Love hath prepared to receive him; he ſees them moſt richly furniſhed with all the Delights that his *vaſt hungry* Deſires can crave or ſwallow to *eternal* Ages. He ſees that there is nothing but a ſhort *momentary* Death,

Death, that like the River *Jordan*, ſeparates *this* Wilderneſs from that *heavenly* Land, and that as ſoon as ever he hath paſt and forded this, his Travel will conclude in *endleſs* Reſt and Pleaſure, in the Accompliſhment of all his Hopes, and the *full* Satisfaction of all his Wiſhes. With the Proſpective of his *Faith* and *Hope* he beholds the *illuſtrious* Orders of *Angels*, the *glorious Company of Apoſtles*, the *goodly Fellowſhip of Prophets*, the *noble Army of Martyrs*, with Crowns of Glory and Bleſſedneſs on their Heads, beckoning to him from the *farther* Shore, to make haſte thither, and come into the *joyous* Participation of their Society and Happineſs. The ſight of all which *glorious* Things, inſpires his Heart with ſuch an Addition of new Life and Vigour, as carries him on with Chearfulneſs and Alacrity through all the *weary* Stages of his Life; for he who walks with *Heaven* in his Eye, is a Thouſand Times happier in his Expectation, than if he had all the Goods this World affords in his Poſſeſſion. The *upright* Man therefore having this *bleſſed* Expectation before him, he goes on with a *bold* and *ſecure* Mind, and in his Courſe is *ſteadfaſt* and *immovable*, *always abounding in the Work of the Lord*; *for as much as he knows that his Labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord.* Seeing therefore the

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vaſt Advantages *Integrity* and *Uprightneſs* hath of *Double-dealing*, as we tender our own Eaſe and Security, let us all ſtudy for the Future, to lead the Remainder of our Lives in *exact* Sincerity, and Simplicity of Heart; which will not only extricate us from the *greateſt* Difficulties and Perplexities of this *preſent* Life, but alſo crown us with *immortal* Eaſe and Happineſs in the Life to come: Which God of his infinite Mercy grant, to whom be Honour, and Glory, and Praiſe, from this time forth and for ever. Amen.

FINIS.

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